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SIN AND HOLINESS OR WHAT IT IS TO BE HOLY



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SIN AND HOLINESS OR WHAT IT IS TO BE HOLY

BY
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Cincinnati: Curts & Jennings
New York: Eaton & Mains

1898

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Introduction

SO MUCH has been written upon the subject of Christian holiness that he who writes anything more should give his reasons for so doing.

1. Chief among the reasons which have led to the preparation of the following pages, has been the conviction that the views presented are greatly needed at the present time in our Churches.

2. Several years ago I presented a paper upon this subject before a Ministerial Association, and at the request of that body a limited number of copies were published in pamphlet form. Since that time many requests have been made, asking that the paper be reprinted. Others have been received, suggesting that the views there presented be enlarged, and placed in more permanent form.

The pamphlet was not satisfactory to me, and I have never been willing that it should be reprinted. The very limited character of the paper did not admit of anything like adequate discussion. It was written in the midst of exciting

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controversy upon the subject, and in some particulars recognized local conditions. The paper dwelt too exclusively upon the *destructive* side of the question, and the language, at some points, was not that which in after time I should have chosen. In writing this book, I have complied with the requests of many whose judgment I respect, and in whose piety I have implicit confidence.

3. At the time of my conversion and connection with the Church, I assumed the correctness of the teachings upon the subject of entire sanctification which I then received. I was taught that they were Scriptural and according to the standards of Methodism. Guided by those who received them in a similar way, I was led at two different periods of my Christian life to believe that I had "experienced the blessing of sanctification," understanding by that term, as I did, the removal or destruction of what I was instructed to regard as "inbred sin." That I did realize at each of these seasons a gracious uplift in spiritual life I shall never doubt. Christ was revealed *to* me and *in* me as he had not been revealed before. For weeks following, not a movement in my nature disturbed the deep calm of

my spirit. I could say with another, "I sought God in everything, and found him everywhere." That I experienced *just what I thought I did*, I do not now believe.

Following upon each of these times of refreshing my emotional fervor subsided. I could not tell how or why. With this subsidence of religious feeling there came to me the consciousness that what I had thought exterminated or destroyed, still existed in my nature. It seemed more easily and steadily controlled, but was ready to respond to objective temptation. The degree of my disappointment I can not describe. The thought that I had been misled or self-deceived in a matter of such sacred importance was well-nigh overwhelming. The experience had come to me in a rapture of heavenly love. It came in response to my prayers and unutterable longings of heart. That it should prove unreal, or not what I had in deepest sincerity sought, seemed inexplicable and confounding.

I saw that either my doctrinal theory or my experience must be at fault. I was often made to know that others were in similar experiences, and equally bewildered. I resolved to study the New Testament with special reference to this

subject. I compared its teachings with those of prominent writers upon Christian holiness. As a result of this study, my own views upon this subject became clearly and satisfactorily settled. I am happy, also, to record that, during the same time, there has come to me a cheerfulness in consecration, a steadiness of faith, and a constancy in the revelation of Christ to my soul, which in former years I had not known. In the work of a pastor since that time I have found many whose experiences in connection with this subject have been similar to my own, and I have evidence that the views presented in the following pages have, in the hand of God, been helpful to a considerable number of sincere but distressed children of God. These are my reasons for writing as I have written.

Throughout the book I have used the terms, "holiness," "entire sanctification," and "Christian perfection," not in their technical sense, but, according to earlier Methodist usage, as synonymous terms, all denoting the same spiritual state—a state of salvation from all sin.

No literary merit has been sought in this production, and none is claimed. To criticism in that line the writer must be allowed to remain

indifferent. The work has been written in the midst of the engrossing duties of the ministry; duties which could not be neglected or made secondary.

It has not been without pain that I have felt obliged to call in question some of the teachings of brethren whom I highly respect and sincerely love. With some of them I have taken sweet counsel in other years, and I would now willingly sit at their feet. I have sought to controvert what I regard as erroneous, without the spirit of controversy. I have not knowingly argued merely for the mastery. I have written for the truth as I understand it. That the book may prove a blessing to all who may read it, and specially to such as are bewildered in their theories and imprisoned in the mysteries of their religious feelings, is the prayer with which the author commits it to the consideration of its readers.

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA, 1898.

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Sin and Holiness

Chapter I

What Sin is Not

IN the light of some systems of religious teaching, the interpretation of the term *sin* is vague and indefinite. It is now a cause, and then an effect; here an inheritance, there a choice; sometimes inevitable, at other times voluntary. Theories which confuse and mystify the mind can not effectually promote either conviction of sin or salvation from it. Such a subject demands clearness and consistency. In this chapter there is, at least, an attempt to be definite and consistent upon

WHAT SIN IS NOT.

I. *Sin can not be affirmed of the action of the body.* Strictly speaking, the body does not act; it only moves as it is moved upon. It is not capable of committing sin; it is not an agent; it is only an instrument. (Romans vi, 13.) The murderer uses his arm as he does his knife or

bludgeon, the arm and the weapons being alike irresponsible. Sin can not be truthfully affirmed of anything which is compelled to be just what it is, and which has no power to do otherwise than it does. This absolute causation is true of all mere muscular action. The mind moves and uses the body, and somewhere in the states and operations of the mind sin must be located.

2. *Our sin is not the sin of our first parents attributed to us.* God does not charge the sin of ancestors upon their posterity. (Ezekiel xviii.) We are in no way responsible for the sin of our parents, our grandparents, or our first parents. The human mind is incapable of blaming itself for any sin to which it has given neither consent nor encouragement. It is impossible for us to affirm accountability for sin committed by others before we were born. Our sin involves the same unbelief, the same self-seeking and disobedience as did that of our ancestors, but we did not sin in their sin. We are not guilty merely because they sinned. We may be more guilty than they were, but our guilt arises out of our own sin. Whatever is our sin, must include *action* or *consent* upon our part.

3. *The inevitable effects of the sin of the first human pair can not properly be termed sin.* We are no more responsible for the unavoidable consequences of the sin of Adam than for that sin itself. Without question, the sin of our ancestral head brought evil consequences upon the race. These consequences touch the bodies and souls of men down to the latest born. We are both *deprived and depraved* as a result. Others of our ancestors, less remote than Adam, have, by their sin, increased the injury. All this, however, is our misfortune, rather than our sin. We can not predicate sin of an unavoidable effect. That which is absolutely caused, no matter how caused, can not be sin. The inevitable effects of the first human sin are thus caused; therefore they are not sin.

4. *A mere perception of sin, as possible to us, is not in itself sin.* Sin may be perceived as possible, without becoming actual. It is important for us to observe that the mind exists in a trinity of Intellect, Sensibility, and Will. Every thoughtful mind is conscious of three corresponding classes of mental operations—*thinking, feeling, and willing*. To the first we refer all such operations as perceiving, knowing, and

judging. The second includes the feelings, such as sensations, emotions, and desires. To the third, we refer all in the nature of intention, purpose, choice, determination. These distinct classes of mental operations include all the phenomena of the mind. To think, to feel, and to will outline all of which the mind is capable. Where, in this category of mental operations, is the seat of sin? It is clear that sin is not merely an intellectual perception. Thinking of sin does not necessarily involve sinning. We are often compelled to think of what is sinful. We see and hear, and are obliged to perceive accordingly. The possibility of temptation exists by the fact that what is sinful may be made to arise, as a thought, in the mind. Jesus himself must have had in his thought all the sin to which the devil tempted him, or he could have made no reply. Had he not perceived the wickedness suggested by the tempter, he would not have been tempted. Thoughts of sin as possible do not become actual sin until they are invited, accepted, harbored. But inviting, accepting, and harboring are not operations of the Intelligence, but of the Will. In this process the Intellect is *receptive only*; the Will is *voluntary*. It

should be noted that the phenomena of the Intellect are *caused*. With objects in given relations, the mind can not avoid perceiving them. "All the operations of the first two of these faculties—namely, Intellect and Sensibility—are universally felt and acknowledged to be necessary and absolutely caused. Present the object before the perceptive power (that being voluntarily or necessarily fixed), and the object *must* be perceived as it presents itself. . . . No physical causation is more absolute than that which exists between the object and its mental results." ¹ If, then, sin can not exist in that which is absolutely caused, its seat is not in the Intelligence. Thinking of sin, is not necessarily sin.

5. *Sin is not any form of mere feeling.* It does not consist in operations of the Sensibility. Emotions and desires arise unavoidably under appropriate conditions. They follow the law of necessity, and, whatever their direction, they do not constitute sin. So long as the will in no degree yields or consents to their suggestion, contrary to the idea of duty, there is no sin. Eve

¹ Whedon on the Will, pp. 13, 14.

did not sin in perceiving the existence of the forbidden fruit; she could not have avoided that. God himself had called her attention to it. Nor was it sin in her to feel both admiration and desire as the result of thus perceiving it. Innocent though she was, she had no power to prevent such an emotion and desire. They were both natural and sinless, and had she in mind gone no farther than emotions and desires, she would have remained without sin. Sin, then, is not mere mental perception; it is not an emotion or desire; it is nothing of which it can be said that it is absolutely caused.²

Remarks

I. We see the error of those who judge of the moral and religious condition of themselves and

² "These conscious acts or states are separated into three broad and general divisions or states of *knowledge*, states of *feeling*, and states of *will*. To know, to feel, and to choose are the most obviously distinguishable states of the soul. These are referred to three faculties, which are designated as, *The Intellect*, *The Sensibility*, and *The Will*. This threefold division of the powers of the conscious *ego* is now universally adopted by those who accept any division or doctrine of faculties. It has taken the place of the twofold division which formerly prevailed, into *the understanding* and *the will*; according to which the sensibility,

others simply by facts of external conduct. They have no other idea of sin than that it consists in certain outward acts. They regard themselves and others as righteous or wicked, just as they have or have not performed certain external acts. The fact is, that while outward conduct may often indicate moral states, it has no moral character itself *apart from the voluntary states of mind which cause it*. It is what is designed, intended, chosen, willed, which determines the moral character of an act.

2. In the light of this subject the important difference is seen between thoughts of evil, and evil thoughts. The former may come into the mind unbidden, and their evil suggestions may be hated and repelled; in such a case they are not evil thoughts. Holiness in thought consists

or the soul's capacity for emotion, was included under the will, and the affections, as they were usually called, were regarded as phenomena of the will."—*Elements of Intellectual Science*, p. 31.

"As when we place the object before a fixed mirror, the mirror forthwith presents the correspondent image, so when we place the object before the fixed intelligence, the intelligence forthwith presents the perception. . . . There are the absolute absence and non-existence of any alternative or contrary power either in the intellective or sensitive nature."—*Whedon on the Will*, p. 14.

in such an attitude of will as resists all evil suggestions at once, and directs the mind to other objects. When the soul is soiled by evil thoughts, it is because the will yields to their suggestions, or consents that they shall remain.

3. We see, also, why many Christians are often in distress with reference to their religious feelings. Whether they are aware of the fact or not, they locate sin in the operations of the sensibility. In order to be holy, they suppose themselves to be under the necessity of securing and maintaining a certain state of the religious emotions. Failing in this, they are in bondage again to fear. When realizing joyous frames of mind, they are wont to think themselves correspondingly holy; deprived of these, they lose faith. With them, emotional fervor is, if not the essence, the most important evidence of deep piety. They should be taught that the religious feelings, apart from the related state of the will, possess no moral character whatever. They, like the operations of the intellect, follow the rigid law of necessity. Certain truths or facts apprehended and believed, corresponding feelings naturally arise. That piety which is constantly employed in taking care of the religious feel-

ings becomes weak, and generally transient. It is necessarily superficial. It is to be feared that, in not a few minds, consecration and faith stand more for certain states of feeling, than for personal dedication to God and reliance upon his promises.

Chapter II

What Sin Is

IN the previous chapter it was shown that sin can not be affirmed of mere bodily movement, nor of the operations of the intellect and sensibility. All these come under the law of causation, and in themselves possess no moral character. This chapter is an effort to show

WHAT SIN IS.

I. *Sin consists in a wrong state of will relative to known obligation.* "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."¹ It is that attitude of the soul in which it refuses to accept the known will of God as the law of its activity, and makes choice of its own will instead. It is voluntary consecration to self-pleasing. It is not desire; it is the *consent of the will to desire*, irrespective of the idea of duty. "Then when lust [desire] hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin."² It is a state in which the soul makes choice of self-seeking, as the law of

¹ James iv, 17. ² Ibid. i, 15.

life. It is the soul asserting its preference for its own way, instead of the way of duty, as defined by the apprehended will of God. It is thus voluntary transgression of the known law of God.³ This is sin, wherever it exists, in all beings and in all worlds.

2. *Sin consists in wrong intention.* Intention gives character to action. In judging of the moral quality of our own acts, or of the conduct of others, we intuitively justify or condemn actions as we approve or condemn the intention which brings them forth. It is evident that external actions may frequently be the same in persons of opposite moral character. This shows that moral quality does not reside in the outward behavior. It is also true that similar views and convictions are sometimes common to both good and bad men. Sensations, desires, sentiments, and emotions often exist similarly in the best and the worst of men. Not so, however, in the ultimate and governing intentions. In these, saints and sinners are opposites. It is plain that moral character can not reside in that in which the good and the bad may be alike. It must

³ 1 John iii, 4.

inhere in that in which these classes essentially differ. They *do* essentially differ in their ruling intentions. The former choose the will of God; the latter their own will. In this supreme, controlling choice of the mind is the moral character. It is impossible for us to attribute sin to any one whose intention we at the same time approve. It is equally impossible for us to ascribe goodness to any one, whatever may be his speech or behavior, if at the same time we believe him to be selfish and wicked in his intention.

3. *This view accords with the teachings of the Scriptures.* The king of Assyria made war upon Jerusalem. God granted him some degree of success for the correction of his unfaithful people. But he at the same time held the Assyrian monarch as guilty, because his intention was not to benefit Israel, but to further his own ambitious schemes. "Howbeit, he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so, but it is in his heart to destroy, and cut off nations not a few."⁴ We are cautioned against trusting the friendly acts of a wicked man, the reason given being that his real character is not in his external acts, but in

⁴ Isaiah x, 7.

what he intends—designs. “For as he thinketh [intends or designs] in his heart, so is he.”⁵ Offerings for the benefit of the poor, and for the support of the gospel, are acceptable to God, not because of the amount contributed, but in view of the intention which prompted the self-sacrifice. “For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.”⁶ Sin and holiness, then, lie in the supreme intention of the mind.

4. *Sin begins before the outward act is performed.* He who purposes that which is sin has already sinned. He may find himself unable to execute his plans, but he is morally just what he would be had he accomplished his designs. The outward act is but the expression of the sin which is already committed in the heart.⁷ If the purpose be formed; if the soul has consented to the forbidden course, the want of power or opportunity to carry out the wicked intention is a mere accident in the case. The sin is all committed the moment the will yields to the sinful suggestion.

⁵ Prov. xxiii, 7.

⁶ 2 Cor. viii, 12.

⁷ Matt. v, 28.

5. *The fact that sin consists in wrong intention or choice, does not imply that, in order to sin, men must choose sin just because it is sin.* Men do not sin for the sake of being sinners. It may be doubted if men ever choose sin as an end. On the contrary, many fear and dread the consequences of being sinners. But different forms of self-gratification are connected with sin, and it is this self-gratification which men seek. They seek this, not because it is sin, but in spite of the fact that it is sin. The known law of God, convictions of duty, the highest interests of themselves and others, do not deter them from this self-seeking. This constitutes them sinners; for sin consists in that voluntary state in which the supreme choice of the soul centers upon self-pleasing, rather than upon pleasing God, and serving the well-being of man.

6. *Every responsible being is, at each moment, in an attitude of will which is either right or wrong.* Every mind capable of affirming of itself obligation, constantly intends—chooses—wills. This intention may not be at all times the object of distinct thought, but the soul has within itself its supreme choice. When duty is apprehended by the mind, its obligations are either accepted

or they are rejected. There is no possible attitude of will respecting duty which is neither sinful nor holy. Choice is made; consent is given, either to the law of duty, or to the law of self-pleasing irrespective of duty. This world's teeming activities are but the efforts of human souls to realize what they supremely choose.⁸

7. *No intelligent being can mix his ruling intention in such a way that it will be partly right, and at the same time partly wrong.* Without doubt, ultimate intention may be right at one time and wrong at another; but at any given moment it is either all right or all wrong. If

⁸ "When the will consents to the performance of an action, though the act be not done, the Omniscient Deity justly considers us as either virtuous or vicious. . . . The moral quality does not belong to the external action, nor to the resolution to carry that conception into effect. It must reside in the intention."—*Wayland's Moral Science*.

"Universally, the merit and demerit of an agent is as his actual choice or intention. . . . However he may be judged by beings who have no other way of estimating the principles by which he regulates himself than the sequents which appear in connection with his volitions, in the court of his own conscience, and in the court of all-seeing truth and justice, he shall be judged according to his choice or intention—according to that which he determined and aimed to do."—*Tappan*.

"The consequences of an action, whatever they may be, do not render it morally either good or bad; the in-

the will consents to the law of self-pleasing, irrespective of duty to God and man, it is not only wrong, it is wholly wrong. On the other hand, when the will stands committed to the law of duty, disregarding all selfish considerations, that state of will is not only right, it is wholly right. Both attitudes of the will, in the same person and *at the same time*, are impossible. Partly to choose self-gratification as the law of our activity, and partly to accept the will of God as that law, involves a contradiction. "No man can serve two masters."⁹ He can serve *either* of the two; he will serve *one of the two*; he can by no possibility serve *both* at the same time. Sin is neither compound nor complex.

tention is everything. Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as moral action; nothing but moral intentions."—*Cousin*.

"Since, then, the relations between our judgments of intentions and moral character are and must be fixed, it follows, as a necessary conclusion, that the moral character of all acts and states of mind is found in the intention alone."—*Mahan's Moral Philosophy*, p. 45.

"I mean (1) That God's goodness consists in the perfect rectitude of his eternal will, and not in a want of power to do an act of injustice; and (2) That the devil's wickedness consists in the complete perverseness of his obstinate will."—*Fletcher's Works*, II, p. 197.

⁹ Matthew vi, 24.

8. *Sin is never impersonal; it does not exist in the abstract.* To conceive of sin as something apart from ourselves, is to allow ourselves to be seriously misled. Sin is the voluntary state of an intelligent being. Your sin is yourself, occupying an unsubmissive attitude towards the will of God. It is not something which exists along with you, but is no part of you. It is not something which God can hate and punish, without affecting you. In a most real sense, *it is you*. It is not capable of being removed from you as a surgeon removes a tumor. It is a voluntary state, to be renounced and forever abandoned. God gives us new hearts, but it is when we make to ourselves new hearts.¹⁰

9. *Strictly speaking, sin admits of no plural number.* Men often speak of their *sins*, as if they could be counted. They think themselves guilty of few; others of many. They overlook the fact that sin is the committal of the will to the law of self-seeking, and that, so long as that attitude is maintained, it is one and continuously the same. Definite acts of sin, whether outward or inward, are but expressions of this standing

¹⁰ Ezekiel xviii, 31.

choice of self-gratification. What impenitent men are accustomed to call sins, are but manifestations of one protracted sin—a will at variance with the will of God. It is not occasionally only that they commit sin; their attitude of known disobedience to God is a continual sin. They fall asleep at night, and rise in the morning in the same prolonged choice of their own way rather than God's way. They sin all the time till they submit themselves to God.

Remarks

1. It is often the case that more importance is attached to the *particular form* in which sin appears, than to its essential nature. The fact is that the particular direction which sin takes in any given life, is entirely incidental to its nature. The immediate consequences of some forms of sin are more readily seen than others; civil law prohibits crime, and the sentiment in society condemns certain vices as specially abhorrent. This is well; but the truth is, that murder, drunkenness, lechery, profanity, hatred, hypocrisy, love of the world, and vaulting ambition, all crime, all vice, all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, is the outcropping of the

same wicked, voluntary choice, by which God is rejected, and self-pleasing is made the law of the life. The particular direction which any sinful life may take is determined by a variety of circumstances. Constitution, habits of childhood, environments, all have their influence; but the sin itself is not an inheritance; it is not a necessity of circumstances; it is not one thing in one man, and another in another: it is the same in all; it is the soul's own, self-originated rebellion against God.

2. Nor can the guilt of sin be determined by the particular way in which it is manifested. Vices and crimes are more shocking to the better class in society than other forms of sin; they indicate, on the part of the transgressor, a greater degree of hardness and deadness to the feelings and sentiments of society; but the personal guilt involved in any given case can not be determined by these facts. Light grades guilt. He who commits his life to the law of self-seeking, while capable of knowing most thoroughly and seeing most clearly his duty to God and to man, he it is who is most guilty in his sin.

3. This subject teaches us that men may perform substantially the same outward acts, and

yet be opposites in moral character. A Christian student may go through all the arrangements and labors necessary to secure an education, maintaining throughout an unbroken intention to glorify God and benefit man. By his side there may be another who performs the same outward acts, but whose standing intention is only to secure position, name, or profit for himself. While doing the same things, one is a Christian; the other is a sinner. Two farmers may plow, and sow, and till, and harvest in the same manner, the one with his whole life surrendered to the will of God, the other equally committed to the law of self-seeking. While performing the same acts, they are opposites in their religious characters.

4. Men frequently entertain the notion that, though they are not Christians, they nevertheless obey God in many respects. This is impossible. Obedience to God does not consist in performing a number of acts right in themselves. It begins with self-renunciation and submission to God. Till then there is not, and can not be any true obedience to God. So long as men maintain the attitude of self-pleasing, and not that of pleasing God, they do not obey him in

anything. "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."¹¹

5. It follows, also, that when a soul supremely chooses the will of God, and accepts his will without mental reservation, he enters upon a state of entire obedience to God. So long as his choice of God, his intention to please him, is maintained without intermission—so long he obeys God; he ceases to sin. If, under the pressure of temptation, he wavers in his supreme purpose, and falls under the law of self-indulgence, he commits sin. His obedience may thus be more or less intermittent. Sin and righteousness may thus be mingled *in the same individual*, but not in the voluntary states of the same person *at the same time*. He who obeys God does, for the time being, obey him with all the heart.

6. In the light of this subject, the enormity of sin distinctly appears. It is man insisting upon having his own way, despite the authority of God and the best interests of his fellow-beings. He will not have Christ to reign over him. He will be his own master. In this he

¹¹ Romans viii, 7.

enthrones his own will in place of the will of God. In maintaining this attitude of disobedience to God, every impenitent sinner treats himself and his own self-pleasing as of more importance than his duty to God and all his obligations to his fellow-men. He insists that his will shall be first; everything else must stand out of the way. No matter what mercies he despises; no matter how many besides himself he ruins; his own will and way, he insists, shall be the supreme affairs, and duty, and God, and heaven, and hell may take care of themselves.

7. This subject shows clearly that sin is not, in any proper sense, one and the same as the *results of sin*. It is not denied that the intellect and the sensibility both suffer as the result of the treason of the will. They take their conditions more or less from the state of the will. Sinful choice deranges and depraves the whole man. It makes still worse all inherited depravity. It deprives the soul of the indwelling Spirit of God, without whose presence man is not truly man. The intellect is darkened and prejudiced concerning spiritual truth; the knowledge of self and of God is lost. The sensibility is in disorder and unnatural development. The affections are mis-

directed, the desires debased, appetite is overgrown, and passion is a flame of fire. On the spiritual side the emotions are torpid, while to the world they kindle at the slightest touch. The body does not escape the dire results of sin. It is cursed and humbled by this disloyalty of the soul to conscience and to God. All this degradation *results from sin*; but it should not be confounded with sin itself. This depravity is *caused*, and is not the same as that which causes it. Being caused, it comes under the law of necessity, and can not be sin. Sin is not caused; it is voluntary consent of the will to that which is known to be contrary to Divine law, under conditions in which opposite action is possible.¹²

¹² "When all the voluntary acts and states of a moral agent are in all respects what they are required to be, he stands perfect and complete in his obedience to the moral law, as far as present duty is concerned. No blame attaches to him for any states of the physical system, or intelligence, or sensibility, unavoidably existing with voluntary obedience to the universal voice of duty. . . . Suppose certain feelings to arise in the mind of an agent wholly independent of his will, and in direct opposition to its most vigorous efforts. These feelings thus arising are not permitted to induce a voluntary act morally wrong, but are held in perfect subordination to the moral law. Can we, by any possibility, impute guilt to an agent under such circumstances? Do we not of necessity suppose his virtue to be strong and beautiful, just in proportion to the

strength of the feelings held in subjection to the idea of duty? But one answer can be given to this question."—*Mahan's Moral Philosophy*, p. 141.

"The final and unerring test of sin, then, is not the existence of the temptation, but the consent of the will. Whenever this consent is given in any degree, then sin commences, and the extent of the consent is the measure of the degree of sin."—*Methodist Quarterly Review*, XXIII, p. 588.

"As all men know that their emotions and desires arise, in spite of them, from the fixed relation God has given to the inward and outward systems, these mental states can indicate not a shadow of agency in man. The removal of all distinction, then, between the volitions and the sensibilities, is an annihilation of all agency. But the true psychology, which makes the volitions of the mind its only executive power, restores the Godlike faculty of self-action to man."—*Dempster's Lectures*, p. 101.

"When, under proper conditions, the external, exciting object is presented, its corresponding appetite or passion is necessarily excited, and tends to seek gratification. This involuntary and necessary excitement which tends to seek its gratification is called lust, and properly constitutes temptation. The existence of this excitement, and the consciousness of its tendency to seek to be gratified, is not sin, nor of the nature of sin. Yet it is admitted to contain the preliminary conditions which may lead to sin. It is therefore the office of virtue and religion either to restrain altogether from indulgence where indulgence is unlawful, or to restrain within proper limits where indulgence is lawful."—*Methodist Quarterly Review*, XXIII, p. 587.

Chapter III

Wesley on the Nature of Sin

THERE are differences of opinion with regard to what John Wesley taught concerning the nature of sin. Some maintain that upon this subject he is self-contradictory; that he sometimes strenuously insists upon the voluntary nature of sin, and at other times calls that sin which has no voluntary element whatever. An explanation of this apparent inconsistency has been attempted by assuming that his views became changed, and that the conflict lies between his earlier and his more mature thinking. Others contend that he taught the existence of two kinds of sin,—the one a “voluntary transgression of known law,” and the other a passive existence, in no way involving any action or state of the will.

We are not prepared to admit that Wesley contradicts himself in this particular; *we* find no evidence that his earlier and his later writings present different views upon this subject, nor do we believe that he can be justly charged with

teaching two different kinds of sin. We think his apparent inconsistency at this point lies in the psychological system which he adopted, and that, when proper allowance is made for a fundamental error in that, Wesley is neither self-contradictory nor a teacher of guiltless sin. On this subject we remark:

1. The following quotations from the writings of Wesley embody a definition of sin which, in one form or another, very frequently appears as his idea of the nature of sin, and in many more instances, in which no formal definition is attempted, the same view in substance is necessarily implied:

“But is voluntary transgression of a known law a proper definition of sin? I think it is, of all such sin as is imputed to our condemnation. And it is a definition which has passed uncensured in the Church for at least fifteen hundred years.”¹

“Nothing is sin, strictly speaking, but a voluntary transgression of a known law of God.[†] Therefore, every voluntary breach of the law of love is sin, and nothing else, if we speak prop-

¹ Works, VI, p. 740.

erly. To strain the matter further is only to make way for Calvinism.”²

“Voluntary humility, calling every defect a sin, is not well-pleasing to God. Sin, properly speaking, is neither more nor less than a voluntary transgression of a known law of God.”³

“Nor doth he sin by infirmities, whether in act, word, or thought; for his infirmities have no concurrence of his will, and without this, they are not properly sins.”⁴

2. It will be readily seen that, in these quotations, sin is made to consist in certain states of the will. Voluntariness is insisted upon as necessarily involved in whatever can be properly called sin. According to these Wesleyan definitions, sin is neither a *defect* nor an *effect*; it does not consist in any passive state; it is nothing which has come upon us as the result of the sin of others; it is our own voluntary activity. It is the will consenting, concurring, choosing, in a manner contrary to the known law of God. Wesley specifically states that, to apply the term *sin* to anything else, is to use the word improperly.

² Works, VII, p. 56.

³ Ibid. p. 94.

⁴ Ibid. I, p. 16.

3. These quotations cover thirty-five years of Wesley's ministry, down to 1773, and he continued to repeat the same definition of sin to at least within six years of his death. With him it constituted a standard definition. The supposition that he changed his views upon this subject is without a shadow of evidence. It is true that Wesley found occasion to change his views upon various topics, and he made no secret of the fact. He was too thoughtful to be able to maintain a precise identity of opinions through a long series of years. When further light convinced him that he was in error, he made haste to correct himself. But he nowhere intimates that he had changed his views concerning the nature of sin. He defined sin as a "voluntary transgression of known law" more than twenty years before he wrote the sermon on "Sin in Believers," and he continued to define it in the same way more than twenty years after that sermon was written.⁵

4. The classification of mental faculties or states as *intellect*, *sensibility*, and *will*, now so universally accepted, was not developed in Wesley's

⁵ Tyerman, III, p. 470.

day. The current system of mental science at that time included all the powers of the mind under the *understanding* and the *will*. By this classification of the mental faculties, "the sensibility, or the soul's capacity for emotion, was included under the will; and the affections, as they were usually called, were regarded as phenomena of the will." ⁶ This was the system of Edwards. We know that Wesley read Edwards, and that he gave battle over his doctrine of necessity, but he adopted the fundamental error in Edwards' Mental Philosophy. The following quotations will show the sameness of their psychological systems. Edwards says:

"God has endued the soul with two faculties. One is that by which it is capable of perception and speculation, or by which it discerns, and views, and judges of things; which is called the Understanding. The other faculty is that by which the soul does not merely perceive and view things, but is some way inclined to them, or is disinclined or averse from them. . . . This faculty is called by various names; it is sometimes called the *inclination*; and as it has

⁶ Porter's Elements of Intellectual Science, p. 31.

respect to the actions that are determined and governed by it, is called the Will.”⁷

After stating that man was given *understanding* by his Creator, Wesley says: “He was endued also with a will, with various affections (which are only the will exerting itself various ways), that he might love, desire, and delight in that which is good; otherwise his understanding had been to no purpose. He was also endued with liberty; a power of choosing what was good, and refusing what was not so.”⁸

“And according to our judgments are our passions; our love and hate, joy and sorrow, desire and fear, with their innumerable combinations. Now, all these passions together are the will, variously modified; and all actions flowing from the will are voluntary actions; consequently they are good or evil, which otherwise they could not be.”⁹

Theological views are more or less shaped by accepted theories in philosophy. Even those who deny that they have any philosophical system, go on like others interpreting Scripture and formulating doctrines in keeping with cer-

⁷ Edwards's Works, III, 3.

⁸ Wesley's Works, II, 69. ⁹ Ibid. VI, 202.

tain philosophical ideas. Wesley's philosophy appears in his doctrine of sin. Along with Edwards, he held the twofold classification of the mental powers. Both writers treated the sensibility and the will as one and the same, confounding the operations of both. Edwards injected his philosophy into his theology by placing the will, along with the sensibility, under the law of necessity. Wesley rejected necessity, and taking the other alternative, placed the sensibility along with the will under the law of "liberty." He, in fact, affirmed voluntariness of the sensibility. Though he repudiated the necessitarianism of Edwards, he did not answer it as Mahan, and Bledsoe, and Whedon have since done, by predicating freedom of the will only, and necessity of the intellect and sensibility. His philosophy had not the advantage of these distinctions. He cut his way out of the necessitarian meshes of Edwards by postulating "liberty as a distinct property of the soul, capable of being exerted with regard to all the faculties of the soul, as well as all the motions of the body."¹⁰ Having thus asserted freedom of the

¹⁰ Wesley's Works, II, 404.

mixed phenomena of the sensibility and will, he was led logically to affirm that they were either sinful or holy. It was thus that he could declare that sin might *exist* where it did not *reign*, and yet define sin as "a voluntary transgression of known law," without a thought of being inconsistent with himself. "Inbred sin," in the light of his philosophy, was the "will exerting itself" sinfully. Holding on to the idea that the element of liberty was somehow in the sensibility, sin might be there; for sin might be wherever there was voluntariness. Those who now talk of "inbred sin," with the proper distinctions in mental operations in their thought, may easily use the very words of Wesley, and at the same time mean what he never meant. They may affirm that to be sin which we know comes under the law of necessity, while he declared that alone to be sin which he regarded as containing a voluntary element. And they may thus quote his words to prove two kinds of sin, while he really taught but one. He used the terms, "inbred sin" and "inward sin," interchangeably. The term "inbred sin," as now commonly used, is made synonymous with what is denominated "Adamic sin"—"birth sin"—from which all

action of the will is understood to be excluded. With Wesley, inward sin was sin committed in the heart, though not necessarily expressed in outward action; *it was voluntary sin*.

5. When Wesley tells us specifically what he means by "inbred sin," he generally names some or all of the following: "anger," "envy," "pride," "self-will." But do these contain no voluntary element? As well say this of murder and gluttony. If a mere feeling of anger receives not a moment's "concurrence of the will," and leads to no purpose or act contrary to love, Wesley would say that it is not sin. On the contrary, if the will does yield to the impulse, it becomes voluntary sin. And what is *envy* but a wicked choice that another may be abased that self may be exalted? *Pride* is the soul choosing to be esteemed and treated as better, or in some way superior to what it knows itself to be. It may be inward or outward; it is the same expressed or unexpressed. And is *self-will* inbred? Can any one doubt its voluntariness? All these forms of sin which Wesley names as illustrating what he means by "inbred sin," or "inward sin," involve a sinful attitude of the will. They are no peculiar

kind of sin; they are not more "roots of sin," "seeds of sin," "remains of sin," than other forms of sin. *They are simply sin, and essentially like all sin.*

6. A similar view should be taken of Wesley's sermon on "Sin in Believers." Quotations from that discourse are often presented for the purpose of showing that he taught the doctrine of two kinds of sin: the one active and voluntary; the other passive, and involving no wrong state of the will.

Such an interpretation of Wesley's words should not pass unchallenged. In that much misinterpreted sermon, the term "inbred sin" is not so much as named. The term "original sin" is used once, and that once in a quotation from the ninth article of the Church of England, and the term "being of sin" appears but in a single instance. The expression most frequently used to designate what he describes as sin in believers, is "inward sin," and this stands opposed to outward sin. He names "pride, self-will, and unbelief," by way of specifications. He describes it as "a will not wholly resigned to the will of God." He identifies it as that sin which was

charged upon the angel of the Church at Ephesus, when he had lost his first love. He calls this "real sin which God saw in his heart, of which accordingly he is exhorted to repent."¹¹ Did Wesley mean, by "a will not wholly resigned to the will of God," a kind of sin which involved no wrong state of the will? Did he mean by "unbelief," some passive existence in the heart, including no voluntary element? Did he mean by "a real sin which God saw in the heart" of the unfaithful pastor at Ephesus, and which called for immediate repentance, only an inherited effect of Adamic transgression? If it be true that, according to the accepted classification of mental operations, pride, envy, and even unbelief, may exist as *mere feeling*, involving no action of the will, Wesley did not so understand it. His psychology merged the feelings in the will, and attached a voluntary element to the mixed phenomena. It was this voluntary character which, in his thought, carried with it the idea of sin. To reject Wesley's psychology, and yet appeal to his sermon on "Sin in Believers"

¹¹ Works, I, pp. 108-116.

as evidence that he taught two kinds of sin, active and passive, is to quote his words, and at the same time to misquote his ideas.

7. The same may be said of Wesley's sermon on "Repentance of Believers," from which quotations are frequently made with the design of proving that he taught a twofold character of sin; in part active and voluntary, and in other part passive and inherited. The sin there portrayed as "remaining in believers," is sin in view of which *repentance is required*. This repentance is declared to be necessary to "our continuance and growth in grace." *Guilt* is predicated of this sin, and, in view of it, believers are taught to regard themselves as "guilty, helpless sinners." Several forms of this sin are mentioned; such as, "a will contrary to the will of God," "jealousies and evil surmisings," "love of the world," "covetousness," "wrong intention," not acting "wholly to do the will of God," "evil shame," "uncharitable conversation,"¹² etc. Can any man believe that Wesley was, in this sermon, describing sin which he regarded as involving no concurrence of the will? Is there

¹² Works, I, pp. 117-123.

anything in the sin here named more inbred or Adamic than there is in all sin? Wesley is particular to state that the sin of which he speaks is that into which believers will fall, "if they do not continually watch and pray." Was he warning his people, lest they should fall into Adamic sin? He states that those who are justified find this sin in themselves "at times."

This sermon teaches that, subsequent to their justification, believers do commit more or less sin, and that, for that reason, they should repent. It sets forth the privilege of every believer in Christ as salvation from all sin. "He saveth thee from all condemnation, by his blood continually applied. Thus it is that we continue in a justified state."¹³

It seems amazing that this sermon should have been so often referred to as proof that Wesley taught the existence of sin which possessed no voluntary character. It is true that three times he speaks of it as "inbred sin," and once as "indwelling sin;" but throughout the entire discourse he affirms of it all the characteristics of voluntary sin. He says that it is "willing

¹³ Works, I, p. 123.

something because it is pleasing to nature, which is not pleasing to God." It is to "sink again into foolish and low desires." It is doing that which is "known to be not for the glory of God." It is "seeking to please ourselves as much, if not more than to please God." The character drawn in this discourse is that of a weak believer, whose consecration is intermittent, who yields to temptation, and who "frequently finds his will exalting itself against the will of God." There is no sin described here which does not necessarily imply a voluntary sinner. In this sermon, Wesley shows that Christians should "earnestly repent, and become heartily sorry for all their misdoings;" that they should humble themselves before God in view of their want of steadfastness, and their failure to maintain a single eye. He encourages them to expect in Christ continued salvation from sin, and admonishes them that, though it is the gift of God, it is not "given all at once, as if they had a stock laid up for many years, but from moment to moment."¹⁴

8. During the years of controversy in the

¹⁴ Works, I, p. 121.

Methodist societies over the subject of sanctification. Wesley again and again defended his doctrine of salvation from all sin against the attacks of his opponents, by showing that they included in their notions of sin what he did not; that he meant by sin a voluntary transgression of known law. To this definition he uniformly adhered.

Chapter IV

The Doctrine of "Inbred Sin"

By a class of able and worthy preachers and writers we are taught that, though sin may be properly defined as voluntary transgression of known law, still there is another kind of sin; another *kind* in the sense that it is not voluntary transgression, and does not consist in either acts or states of the will. They designate this sin as "inbred sin," "birth sin," "original sin," "Adamic sin," etc.; meaning by these terms such of the effects of ancestral sin as are *inherited*, and now experienced in the tendencies of our depraved natures. We are told that this sin is "*inbred*," because it is transmitted from the first human pair, through intermediate parentage, down to the last born of the race.

The fact that the sin of our progenitors has brought evil effects upon their posterity, is readily admitted. We are a sin-struck race. — But, sad as these effects are, are they in any proper sense *sin*? Can that be *our sin* which is upon us by unavoidable inheritance?

We are not objecting to the use of terms merely. Any terms are good enough when so used as to convey correct ideas; but to use the terms "inbred sin," "birth sin," etc., with the distinct affirmation that they mean not personal, voluntary sin, but the effects of parental sin, and then to *read into them* the very qualities and consequences of voluntary sin, is certainly misleading. On this subject we offer the following remarks:

1. *The indefiniteness and confusion of thought which appear in efforts to maintain this theory of sin are at least very noticeable.* This can not be attributed to the want of ability on the part of those who advocate this view. The fact indicates rather that there are serious difficulties in the theory itself. An eminent writer, who supports the doctrine that sin, in one kind, may be inherited and inbred, says:

"Every effort I have made to define clearly to my own mind precisely what is meant by sin in believers, has deepened the conviction that the subject is one of manifold difficulty, and about which there is great confusedness of thought. I find evidences of obscurity in all the writings about it. The most eminent divines are

not clear. . . . Possibly it belongs to that class of occult subjects which refuse to be brought into the categories of clear thought.”¹

But is it not at once strange and significant that such “manifold difficulty” and dense “obscurity” should hang over a subject which is regarded as eminently practical and vitally important? Is there in this no suggestion of possible error in the theory itself? Why is it that “the most eminent divines” are unable sufficiently to penetrate this “occult subject,” to give us any clear definition of this “sin in believers?”

2. As illustrative of the “confusedness of thought” which this distinguished author discovers in writings upon this subject, *take the words and phrases most commonly used to denote what is termed “inbred sin,” in distinction from voluntary transgression.* To those already mentioned, we may add the following: “Roots of sin,” “seeds of sin,” “indwelling sin,” “remains of sin,” “tendency to sin,” “inbeing of sin,” “the sin principle,” “remains of the carnal mind,” “carnality,” “fallen nature,” “rudiments of the carnal mind,” “passive principle of sin,” “the evil

¹ Christian Purity, pp. 117, 118.

principle." These are the terms most frequently used by those who maintain the doctrine of inherited sin to designate what is held to be this "sin in believers." And what is there defined, or explained, or made clear by them all? The question still returns, with all its "manifold difficulty," What is sin in believers? What is "inbred sin?"

3. *It should be noted, also, that in all this list of descriptive definitions of what is said to be inbred sin, there is not a term or phrase which is ever used in the Bible.* There are words used which are found in the Scriptures, but they are not found in the combinations here given. The word *sin* often occurs in the Bible, but "inbred sin," "remains of sin," "inbeing of sin," "sin principle," etc., are terms quite unknown to the Word of God. The term "carnal mind" is used by Paul; but he says nothing about the "remains of the carnal mind." Possibly the reason is given in the remark of Adam Clarke, when he says that the word *carnal*, in the New Testament, is "always used with respect to the unregenerate."² We do not object to the use of terms merely

² Commentary on Romans viii, 6, 7; 1 Cor. iii, 1-4.

because they are not found in the Bible; but it can not be otherwise than significant that a doctrine of the Scriptures, held to be so vitally connected with Christian experience, and by many good men taught as an essential truth in personal religion, should be uniformly named, stated, and defined in terms not found in the language of the Scriptures, but apparently coined for the purpose of expressing the doctrinal idea. This is certainly not the case with other doctrines relative to salvation.

4. *The "confusedness of thought" upon this subject seems rather increased than diminished when we come upon the explanations which are given, in connection with these terms, by those who maintain that sin can be properly affirmed of passive as well as of voluntary states. "Remains of sin" would seem to indicate that some sin had been taken away from a believer, and that other some of the same kind of sin remained untaken away. But a writer who uses this term frequently, tells us that "inbred sin is a unit, a simple evil principle, and can not be divided or subdivided, and removed in parts."*³ The writer of several

³ Perfect Love, p. 77.

books in which this subject is discussed at length, says: "When inbred sin goes, it all goes; when it stays, it all stays." We are taught that inbred sin in believers is sin "without either guilt or power;" but that "it is loathsome to God," and that it "unfits the soul for heaven." We are told that it is "an effect of sin, and so called sin."⁴ That is, it is called sin, not because it is sin, but because it is the effect of sin. And is the effect one and the same with the cause? Again, we are taught that this "inbred sin" consists in a "tendency to sin." But is tendency to sin the same as sin itself? Tendency to sin may be temptation; but if there is meaning in words, it should be distinguished from the sin to which it is a tendency. We are also told that this sin consists in "controlled tendencies to sin," but that it is also the impulse which "struggles mightily for the mastery," and "prevails against us at times." And it is maintained that "Christians may and do live many years accepted of God, while their inbred sin is not removed;" but that this sin "makes daily work for repentance," and that its removal is "necessary to continued

⁴ Christian Purity, p. 125.

justification." An esteemed author writes: "Inbred sin is a carnal principle or root remaining in the unsanctified heart, sending up sprouts of bitterness which cling to the desires and appetites." ■

If we can understand this sentence, it locates what the author calls "inbred sin" outside of all possible phenomena of mind. It sends up something which somehow comes in contact with the sensibility, and is therefore two steps at least away from the operations of the mind. Into this unexplored region, unknown to either theology or philosophy, we are taught to look, in order to find sin in believers. We are not disposed to attribute this confusion of thought so much to the writer as to his theory. Failing to locate sin wholly in the voluntary operations of the mind, and pressed by the fact that all the movements of the sensibility take place under the law of absolute causation, and hence, in themselves, possess no moral character, the logic of his theory compelled him to posit "inbred sin" quite beyond the field of mental operations. But what

⁵ Perfect Love, p. 65.

of the theory of sin which demands such desperate leaps into the unknown and unknowable?

5. *When those who maintain the theory in question specify any operation or condition of the mind, as showing the fact of inbred sin in believers, they generally, if not invariably, name that which is in reality voluntary sin.* It has already been shown that the anger, pride, envy, and self-will, which Wesley names as belonging in "inbred sin," are really inward sinning, and that he so understood them. Rutherford tells us that "inbred sin is unbelief, pride, anger, peevishness, murmuring, sinful self-love, foolish desires, and undue attachments to persons and things."⁶ And are these the ingredients of sin which has neither guilt nor power? What more involves the will than unbelief and pride? Is there no voluntary element in peevishness, murmuring, and sinful self-love? Are they not forbidden as sins against God? An eminent writer, who maintains the theory of both voluntary and passive sin, hesitates at this point, and seems, on the whole, to conclude that whatever can be called sinful must possess a voluntary character. "Let it be remembered," he

⁶ Quoted in *Christian Purity*, p. 82.

says, "we are now speaking particularly of inbred sin—sins of the heart; or, if any prefer the term, evils of the heart."⁷ And again: "A moral defect differs from a natural one in this, that the one is voluntary, the other is constitutional; the one is sinful, the other is blameless."⁸ Inbred sin, then, according to so much of this author's book, consists in sins of the heart, and only those defects are moral and sinful which are, in their nature, voluntary, as opposed to that which is unavoidable.

6. *The evil effects of ancestral sin are not confined to "the desires, appetites, and passions;" they touch the whole man.* They exist in the condition of the intelligence as well as in that of the sensibility. If the fact that something is the effect of sin makes that something also sin, then *all* the effects of sin are themselves sin. All that is abnormal in the intelligence, or different from what it would have been had the race not known sin, must stand in the category of inbred sin. It is true that those who maintain the theory under consideration do not admit that the effects of ancestral sin, as those effects exist in the

⁷ Christian Purity, p. 110. ⁸ Ibid. p. 77.

intellect of the race, are to be included in inbred sin; but in this they are untrue to the logic of their theory. If some of the effects of Adamic sin are *for that reason* sin, then all the effects of ancestral sin must, for that same reason, be also sin. Why not? They are all the same in their relations to parental sin; they are the effects of sin. They all sustain the same relation to ourselves; they are inherited. To be consistent, therefore, this theory must include in its inbred sin all mental defects which have come upon us as the result of the sin of others,—a treacherous memory, a misleading imagination, and all forms whatsoever of infirmity and impotency of mind.

7. *Further, the effects of ancestral sin are not confined to the mind; they are upon the bodies as well as the souls of the race.* Under the law of transmission, infirmities and diseases of various kinds move down the current of human blood; sickness, pain, disability, and incapacity appear as effects of the sin of ancestors. To deny that these physical results of preceding sin are themselves also sin, is to deny that anything is sin because of its relation to Adamic or ancestral sin. This, in one way, concedes the whole question. It admits that the effects of parental sin,

near or remote, are not, *for that reason*, properly called sin. It is an admission that a voluntary element must enter into whatever can be called sin.

Will it be said that the effects of ancestral sin are sin only so far as provision is made for their removal, and that they become sin in us by a refusal on our part to accept the offer of salvation from them? This concedes the point at issue in another way. (1) It admits that the effects of ancestral sin, as they have come upon us, are not *in themselves* sin. (2) It allows that these effects can become sin in those only who come to know their privilege to be saved from them. (3) It concedes that all that is sin in the case consists in the voluntary neglect or refusal to accept a known offer of salvation. This would be sin *committed*, not sin *inherited*. It makes sin in believers, just like all other sin, wholly voluntary in its nature.

8. *The theory under consideration affirms sin of responsible beings, and yet denies that this sin in itself involves guilt.* Those who maintain the theory of passive sin are compelled to admit the notion of sin without guilt. They do not claim that we all sinned in Adam, and that we deserve

damnation for what others did long before we were born; reason and conscience recoil at the monstrous dogma. The human mind seems utterly unable to affirm personal guilt because of the sins of ancestors, and equally unable to condemn itself because of their unavoidable effects. If the inevitable effects of Adamic sin are sin, they are certainly *guiltless sin*. But where in the Bible do we find the doctrine of sin without guilt? Throughout the Scriptures the ideas of sin and guilt include and involve each other. Degrees of guilt may be determined by different measures of light; but the fact of guilt and liability to penalty inhere in all which the Bible calls sin.

A scholarly author who defends the theory of "inbred sin," in a recent work, says: "John's doctrine of sin is more clear-cut and less hazy than Paul's, because it always means one thing, lawlessness active, voluntary, and responsible. . . . With John sin always entails guilt. It is never guiltless tendency."⁹ And again he says: "It is to be greatly doubted whether John applies so strong a term as sin to these involun-

⁹ Half Hours with St. Paul, p. 260.

tary defects; for they lack the voluntary element, and do not entail guilt. St. John knows no guiltless sin.”¹⁰

We are happy to accept the “clear-cut” definition of sin always given by St. John, in which he declares sin to be “active, voluntary, and responsible,” and we must think that all the haziness which the esteemed author discovers in the doctrine of Paul results from reading into his teachings what is not really there. And what are we to make of the fact that “St. John knows no guiltless sin?” If he knows no guiltless sin, he certainly knows no sin which consists in the inevitable effects of the sin of Adam. And if this doctrine of inbred sin in believers constitutes such an important fact in Christian teaching as some would maintain, how came John to omit it altogether in his writings? The writer alluded to, explains this singular fact by stating that “John contemplates sin in the light of the law; Paul in the light of experience.”¹¹ But did not John write from the standpoint of experience equally with Paul? And did not Paul discuss sin in its relations to law? Such an explanation

¹⁰ Half Hours with St. Paul, p. 264.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 260

is, to say the least, very unsatisfactory. We prefer to say that Paul and John agree in teaching that there is no guiltless sin.

The fact that that is not sin which does not involve guilt, appears to be inadvertently conceded in a work already named; a work in which the doctrine of "inbred sin" is carefully maintained. In arguing that salvation from all sin is required, the writer says: "If entire freedom from sin is not required, then some sin may be allowed innocently, without guilt; for it is contrary to no requirement, the transgression of no law, and can not therefore involve guilt or crime; but, then, it is not sin at all."¹² The logic of this quotation is simply this: whatever is not the transgression of law does not involve guilt, and whatever does not involve guilt is not sin at all. So let it be.

9. *The theory of "inbred sin" before us, involves the absurdity of affirming the existence of sin where there is no sinner.* It maintains that "inbred sin" exists in infant children, and yet it is not claimed that these children are sinners. This same "inbred sin," it is maintained, exists in Christian

¹² Christian Purity, p. 151.

believers, though they may be living in a justified and regenerated state, and are therefore not, in the Scripture sense, sinners. But where in the Bible do we find this sin in the abstract? Where is this sin existent and possessed, but which does not imply a sinner? Where this artificial distinction between being in sin, and sin being in us? When sin is affirmed in the Bible, it is in the concrete. It is joined with a sinner; *it is the act or state of a sinner.*

10. *This theory is sadly embarrassed when it attempts to deal with the question of infant salvation.* It maintains that "inbred sin" exists in children, previous to accountability, in such a sense that they are unfitted for heaven; that, in the cases of those children who die in infancy, a work of the Holy Spirit is wrought in them, at or near death, by which their "birth sin" is removed, and they are thus prepared to enter heaven; but that, in the cases of children who continue to live, God allows their "inbred sin" to remain.

Now, we venture to say that there is not a line in the Word of God which teaches that infants need the removal of "inbred sin" in order

to their entrance into heaven. Nor is there one intimation that any such work of removal is ever wrought in dying children, or that the Holy Spirit does a work in children who die, which he does not do in those who live. This supposed removal of "inbred sin" from the child must take place, of course, without any action or fulfilled conditions on his part. It must be a matter wholly depending upon the will of God. Does God will the removal of "inbred sin" from infant children at their death, but wills that it shall remain in them from their birth to their death? Is it his will that it should be taken away from children who die, but his will that it should remain in all those who live? It would seem impossible for persons to accept these conclusions except at the extortionate demands of a theory. It is true, these conclusions are required by the doctrine that sin is inherited and inbred, just as the notion of infant damnation is demanded as a necessary complement of the doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation. As we understand the New Testament, all infant children, living or dying, are in a state of initial salvation; they are from their birth members of the king-

dom of God.¹³ With the notion of inherited sin assumed, it is no wonder that a distinguished professor in one of our theological schools should have said concerning infant salvation: "I frankly concede the profound mystery, and as frankly admit I have no light to give. Nor have I been able to receive light from others. The fact of infant salvation, in case of death, I do not question. But its philosophy is a mystery as yet without solution."¹⁴

11. *This theory is equally embarrassed when the question is raised as to the final salvation of justified and regenerated souls who die before receiving the removal of "inbred sin."* According to this theory, they are not fitted for heaven; they can not go there in unfitness. What becomes of them? They are children of God, and will not be banished from his presence, and, according to this theory, they can not take their "inbred sin" with them into heaven. Do they go to heaven? If so, how do they get rid of their "inbred sin?" At this gigantic difficulty the defenders of this theory have labored diligently, though very ineffectually.

¹³ Luke xviii, 15, 16.

¹⁴ Methodist Review, LXXIX, p. 352.

Some are logically consistent with themselves, and frankly teach that to such as do not seek and obtain the removal of their "inbred sin" previous to death, there will be no admission to heaven. It can not be denied that this is entirely consistent with the theory. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord,"¹⁵ is quoted as referring, not to the holy character and life belonging to all true Christians, but as proving that the specific removal of "inbred sin" must be experienced subsequent to regeneration, in order to an entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

Others maintain that all true Christians *do* experience this removal of the "inbeing of sin" at or near death, but that with the many it is at an hour or moment so late that no evidence can come back to us. And so we are called upon to accept, as a solution of this difficulty, a supposition supported by no evidence, and confessedly incapable of proof.

One of the ablest advocates of this view attempts to cut this knot, so difficult to untie, by gravely stating that God will not allow any truly regenerated soul to leave the world until his in-

¹⁵ Hebrews xii, 14.

bred sin is removed. He calls this "answering the question by destroying it."¹⁶ On the contrary, it neither answers the question nor destroys it. It simply expresses the opinion of an able and good man, unsupported by any evidence whatever. It graciously bows at the difficulty, and passes by on the other side.

In a recent book, purporting to be a reply to the work of Dr. Mudge on "Growth in Holiness," we are told that "our dear children dying in infancy," though "they inherit an evil nature," "without any condition on their part, or on the part of their parents, or on the part of any priesthood of an earthly character, are saved," and then the writer adds: "Just so with God's own children; if they are justified, if they are regenerated, if they are in Christ—as all childhood is—they are saved; the work is cut off in righteousness, and they enter their heavenly home." A little farther on, the writer says: "There is only one drawback to this in our mental concepts; that is, where depravity is known to exist—where the possibility of its removal is revealed to the mind, by whatever means, and is not *em-*

¹⁶ Central Idea of Christianity, pp. 59, 61.

braced—there is more or less of responsibility. How far it may extend, to what length it may go, I can not tell. But I would say that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, no one is ever condemned, or lost, simply for the existence of carnality or depravity.”¹⁷

Several things in these quotations are suggestive of the embarrassment of this theory, when attempting to meet the question concerning the final salvation of those believers who have not, previous to death, received this specific removal of their “inbred sin.”

(1) It is stated that this class of Christians are saved from their “carnality,” as dying infants are saved, “without any condition on their part.” Of course, no proof of this is presented; there is none to present. It is, however, a “working hypothesis” which makes room for the theory that a specific removal of the effects of Adamic sin is a condition of eternal salvation.

Bishop Foster takes quite a different view. He says: “The case of infants can not be analogous in any respect to that of adult believers. . . . How far what is done for believers in

¹⁷A Manual of Holiness, pp. 85, 86.

death is without their concurrence we can not know, nor can we assume that their case is not exceptional.”¹⁸ He says that, “If we knew precisely what the depravity is, we should be better able to speak of the cure.”¹⁹

(2) The writer of the “Manual” thinks that “no one is ever condemned, or lost, simply for the existence of carnality or depravity;” and yet, according to his theory, this carnality or depravity is *sin*, and must be removed from the soul in order to final salvation. This judgment, however, he bases upon “the best of his knowledge and belief.”

(3) Note also that the *sin* for which he makes men responsible, and which alone brings condemnation or endangers ultimate salvation, is a voluntary neglect, or refusal to accept known privilege. In this he is right, however inconsistent with his own theory. Voluntary neglect of known privilege is *sin* in any being, no matter to what that privilege may refer.

(4) The things which the writers just quoted admit that they do not know, and which pertain vitally to this subject, are significant. They do

¹⁸ Christian Purity, pp. 332, 333.

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 123.

not know how far human responsibility for the existence of "inbred sin" extends; it is "more or less;" enough to operate as a "drawback in the mental concepts" concerning the salvation of all justified believers. They do not know what is done relative to the "carnality or depravity" of believers who die in a "merely justified state." The first writer is confident that the work done for dying believers of this class is illustrated by what God does for dying children, and that whatever is done for them in the case, is done "without any condition on their part." The second is equally positive that "the case of infants can not be analogous *in any respect* to that of adult believers," and that "we can not know" how far what is done for them in death, is done with their concurrence. Nor are they prepared definitely to state in what this "depravity," this "inbred sin," consists. And since there is so much concerning this subject which they do not know, do they know that the effects of ancestral sin in children and adults are *sin*, and do they know that the removal of these effects constitutes fitness for heaven? With great respect for the writers, we must be allowed to think they do not.

12. *The theory under discussion predicates sin*

of the phenomena of the sensibility. It can not locate its "inbred sin" elsewhere. It excludes the will from any part in it; for if the will is involved, it becomes voluntary transgression, and must entail guilt. It is not claimed that the abnormal states of the intellect are included in "inbred sin," so that, whatever is meant by sin in believers, it belongs exclusively to the sensibility—the susceptibility of feeling. Every time it is defined as a "tendency to sin," "a state of the appetites, passions, and affections, which inclines to sin," it is assigned to the operations of the sensibility alone.

Now, so far as we know, it is universally admitted that all the operations of the sensibility take place under the law of absolute necessity. Whedon states that they are "universally felt, and acknowledged to be necessary and absolutely caused."²⁰ Certain objects existing in given relations to the mind, corresponding states of the sensibility, can not otherwise than exist. This theory of "inbred sin," therefore, declares that to be *sin* which exists by inevitable causation. It affirms moral character of that which

²⁰ Whedon on the Will, p. 13.

comes into being as inevitably as if decreed by God from all eternity.

An article in a recent number of the *Christian Witness* (apparently editorial) contains the following remarkable statement: "There is no moral quality in the will; all moral quality lies in the affections and desires." We can not conceive of a proposition more directly and wholly at variance with the accepted truths of mental and moral science than this. It appears in support of the theory that sin and holiness both consist in certain passive states. It affirms that there is no moral character in voluntary states, while, in fact, all moral quality resides in voluntary states. It asserts that all moral quality resides in the states of the sensibility, though these states are always passive, always caused, and possess no moral character at all. According to this philosophy, there is neither vice nor virtue, sin nor holiness, in anything which a man may intend or purpose. His sin consists in the existence of a certain state of impulse or desire, though these states may exist despite his power to prevent them, and though he may in no degree yield to them. John Wesley was evidently right in thinking that, to call anything *sin*,

excepting voluntary transgression of known law, was only to make way for Calvinism. To affirm moral character of that which arises in the mind, "as images arise in a mirror," ²¹ under the law of absolute necessity, and to deny moral quality to the intention and purpose of the soul, are notions as contradictory to Methodist theology as subversive of sound philosophy.

13. *We further object to the theory under consideration, that it makes no proper distinction between temptation and sin.* It affirms sin of "tendency," "inclination," "desire," "impulse," whenever these are towards that which is forbidden. But tendency, inclination, excitement of desire, are states of the sensibility. They do not necessarily involve wrong action of the will. They may be constantly resisted and overcome. They do not, in themselves, include the least degree of the soul's consent to that which is sinful. Sin begins where the soul begins its consent to that which is known or believed to be sin. On the contrary, this theory of "inbred sin" makes the beginning of sin to be the existence of some appetency, or excitement of desire,

²¹ Whedon on the Will, pp. 13, 14.

which at the same time may not for a moment gain the soul's consent, or sway its voluntary action. What this theory therefore calls "sin in believers," is really temptation. It is evil suggestion, and, at most, solicitation to sin. It may be, and is, tendency to sin; it is inclination to sin; but *so long as it goes no further than the excited movements of the sensibility, it is not sin; it is temptation only.* This fact is sometimes practically conceded by those who maintain that what is inbred may nevertheless be sin. A writer, already quoted, in showing the precise point at which the soul passes from the stage of temptation into that of sin, says:

"Is it where the evil thing suggested awakens a movement of the passion to which it is addressed? Not necessarily, we think, since anything to be a temptation must have a natural power to awaken impulse toward it, and sin does not reside in mere impulse. . . . We think it is precisely at the point where the soul is conscious of a disposition to yield to what it supposes to be sin, that is discovered sinfulness, and the beginning of sin." ²²

²² Christian Purity, p. 73.

If this statement of the case be correct, and it strikes us as eminently so, sin is not what is *inbred*, but begins just where the will begins its yielding to the evil suggestion or inclination. The inclination is temptation; the yielding is sin.

“When, under proper conditions, the external exciting object is presented, its corresponding appetite or passion is necessarily excited, and tends to seek gratification. This involuntary and necessary excitement, which tends to seek its gratification, is called lust, and properly constitutes temptation. The existence of this excitement, and the consciousness of its tendency to seek to be gratified, *is not sin, nor of the nature of sin.*”²³

“The appetite being but a modification of desire, the same element may be found in any temptation to evil; and its general designation would be a conscious tendency of some of the desires to seek gratification in a forbidden object.”²⁴

“Even in his state of innocence man felt the risings of desire, nor was this in him counted sin. Hence we are never required, either in the Old

²³ Methodist Quarterly Review, XXIII, p. 587.

²⁴ Philosophy of Christian Perfection, p. 19.

Testament or the New, to eradicate these desires; which, indeed, is a thing impossible, and would cause a destruction of human nature itself; but only to keep them under control, and to suppress those which fix upon forbidden objects." ²⁵

14. *This theory apparently leads many mentally to conceive of "inbred sin" as a physical existence.* Much of the current teaching upon this subject would indicate to the average mind that it is a kind of sin-substance, remaining in the soul as sediment might adhere to an uncleansed vessel. It is spoken of as if it were a kind of sin-existence, capable of being destroyed, exterminated, or removed from one place to another. Its "removal" is termed "a piece of spiritual surgery, to cut away the carnality;" ²⁶ "a surgical operation on the heart;" ²⁷ as if "inbred sin" could be taken away from the soul, as a surgeon removes a tumor from a diseased body. A writer compares it to seams of slate in veins of coal, and adds: "It is not a thing to be pardoned; it is to be removed from the soul by cleansing or purification." ²⁸

²⁵ Christian Theology, Section 78.

²⁶ Half Hours with St. Paul, p. 161. ²⁷ Ibid. p. 189.

²⁸ Perfect Love, pp. 42, 59.

It is true that, in speaking of spiritual things, we are compelled to use language which is associated with material objects; but these gross conceptions are not wholly to be attributed to the sterility of language. They are not the product of unphilosophical minds; they are more than suggested by the theory to which we object. Bishop Foster evidently recognizes this bearing of the theory, when he says:

"The words, sin removed and sin remaining, are suggestive of substance; for instance, of some *esse* that is carried away, and of some *esse* that is left behind, thus grossly debauching the mind at the very start." ²⁹

This is certainly correct. The terms "sin removed" and "sin remaining," applied to the movements of the sensibility, are more than suggestive of substance. They describe "inbred sin" in language which claims to be strictly philosophical, but which, at the same time, is more strictly applicable to material substances.

15. *This theory is untrue to accepted psychological facts.* As defined by this theory, inbred sin, so called, resides in the sensibility. The

²⁹ Christian Purity, p. 119.

phenomena of the sensibility do not exist *in stock*. They exist as pain exists; the product of exciting causes. They come into being because certain objects, apprehended by the intelligence, come into certain relations to the sensibility. They continue so long as their causes remain operative. When pain is not felt, it does not exist. *When desire, appetite, and passion are not felt in the soul, they are not there.* The susceptibility of feeling them is always there; but these movements of the sensibility, being in fact forms of the feelings, when they are not felt they do not exist. The disordered condition of the sensibility is a fact always present, and its movements and excitements are greatly modified by both personal and parental sin; but the notion that certain states of the sensibility exist in bulk, and that they are manifested because there is a quantity of them in the soul, is a most unphilosophical concept. By their very nature, the states of the sensibility exist just so long as they are felt, and they can exist no longer than they are felt.

If it be true, therefore, that anger, pride, envy, and all the make-up of what is called inbred sin, exist in the soul *as movements of the sensibility*,

they exist while they are felt, and no longer. *So far as they are phenomena of the sensibility, they are forms of the feelings.* The susceptibility of experiencing these feelings is a capacity of the mind, and exists continually; the feelings themselves come into existence by exciting causes. The quickness, intensity, and duration of the excitement will depend upon various circumstances. Ancestral sin, personal sin, the attitude of the will, all have their influence; but more than all else is the fact of personal unbelief or faith in Christ; the absence from, or the presence in, the soul of the Holy Spirit of God. Desire, appetite, and passion are not faculties; they are not substances; they are not entities; they are movements of the feelings. They are not sinful in themselves, whatever their form. In sinful beings the will yields to their solicitation; in holy men they are, through grace, controlled by the will. When they exist, nothing is added to the soul; when they do not exist, nothing is taken away from it.

A very positive defender of the doctrine of "sin in believers" was asked the question: "If I get a clean heart, where does my depravity go to?" To this the teacher replied: "Well, if you

lose your headache, where does your headache go to? You tell me where your headache goes to, and I will tell you where your depravity goes to." ³⁰

If this preacher meant to make a serious answer to the question, he conceded the fact that what he called inbred sin consisted in states of the sensibility, which exist as the result of exciting causes. It is not then a "principle of evil;" it is not "roots of sin;" it is not "remains of sin;" it consists in certain forms of the feelings, variously occasioned, and as variously manifested. To treat these movements of the sensibility as a kind of substratum of sin—a standing deposit or accumulation of sin material—is certainly far from a correct psychological view.

16. *This theory of both active and passive sin is not Wesleyan.* We are aware that many regard it as very prominent in the teachings of Wesley. They think this so evident that they look upon any other view with suspicion, as wanting in candor or sincerity. They are very positive that to call in question the doctrine of "inbred sin," as it is quite commonly taught, is to attack Wesley

³⁰ Love Abounding, p. 395.

and to dishonor Methodism. It is true that there are passages in the writings of Wesley which apparently teach this view, and it will not be denied that there are passages which support an opposite view. We have already shown, however, that Wesley teaches this doctrine *in appearance only, not in fact*.³¹ It is only by misunderstanding or ignoring his psychological system that he can be made to teach the notion of involuntary sin. Wesley accepted the twofold classification of the mental faculties which was current in his time. With him the "understanding and the will" included all the powers of the mind, and, as an inevitable result, the operations of the sensibility and of the will stood, in his thought, in the same class. Affirming "liberty" of the will, he necessarily attached the same idea to the operations of the sensibility, for they were not separated in his thought. He regarded both as containing a voluntary element. Hence, the sin which Wesley found in the sensibility was, as he understood it, voluntary sin. He repeatedly states that "the affections are only the will

³¹ See Chapter III.

exerting itself in various ways." Those who assume that he made the distinction between sensibility and will which is now commonly taught, may think they find in his words the doctrine of passive sin; the mistake, however, is not so much Wesley's, as it is the error of those who quote him. He did not make this distinction. For this reason it is easy to quote his words without reproducing his ideas, as is not unfrequently done in connection with this subject.

It is a fact suggestive of Wesley's teachings upon this subject that, when he formulated the Articles of Religion of the Methodist Episcopal Church, he formed Article VII of the Methodist Discipline from the Ninth Article of the Church of England. This article, as it stood in the Creed of the English Church, was entitled, "Of Original or Birth Sin." In forming the Seventh Article for American Methodism, Wesley did not change the title, but he did change the article itself. Three important declarations contained in the original article concerning this "original or birth sin," were by Wesley entirely omitted. One of these declarations was to the effect that, though believers are not condemned because of

their original sin, yet it "hath of itself the nature of sin."³² Why did Wesley leave out this part of the English article, which so distinctly affirms "sin in believers," much as it is taught by the theory under review? Would those who teach this theory have left it out, had they been framing the new articles? Had that clause been transferred to the Methodist Articles of Religion, would it not now be quoted as showing this theory to be in line with the creed of Methodism? Here was an excellent opportunity for Wesley to have set his seal to the doctrine of transmitted and inherited sin, had he desired to have done so. Instead of doing this, the declaration that the effects of Adamic sin "have of themselves the nature of sin," together with the horrible but logical conclusion based upon it, that "every person born into this world deserveth God's wrath and damnation," he dismissed from our Articles of Religion, as having no place in the doctrinal beliefs of Wesleyan Methodism.

³² Creeds of Christendom, III, p. 493.

Chapter V

"Sin in Believers"

IN WHAT SENSE IS THERE SIN IN BELIEVERS?

1. *Not in the sense that believers are in any way responsible for the sin of Adam, nor for the sin of any other of their ancestors, near or remote.* The sin of our first parents, and of our last parents, was their own sin, and could not be the sin of any others than themselves. It was voluntary upon their part, and that which is voluntary can not be transmitted to another. The inevitable consequences of parental sin have descended to all succeeding generations, but the sin itself is not capable of transmission. As well maintain that all men committed murder in Cain, or became drunken in Noah, as that the whole race sinned in the disobedience of Adam and Eve.

2. *Sin can not be said to be in believers, from the fact that they, in common with the race, suffer the consequences of ancestral sin.* That they do suffer these consequences is admitted; that these consequences have come upon them by unavoidable inheritance will not be denied. Being un-

avoidable, they are not in themselves sin. They may be "inbred," but this only confirms the fact that they are inevitable. Inbred derangement, perversion, disorder, are, more or less, in believers; but more cloudless certainty can scarcely exist in a mathematical axiom than that, whatever is upon us by the unavoidable operation of fixed law, is not our sin.

3. *There is no unrenounced sin in believers.* Whenever sin is renounced, it is in honest purpose wholly abandoned. It is abandoned *as sin*, and because it is sin. This purpose includes whatever is known or believed to be sin. To purpose the forsaking of some forms of sin while clinging to others, is not renunciation of sin at all. Those who regard themselves as Christians, and at the same time are in a state in which some forms of known sin are not given up, are not, and can not be, believers in the New Testament sense. They may believe Bible facts and doctrines, and so may wicked men and devils; but they can not, while harboring known sin, believe unto salvation. Of "the devil and all his works" every genuine convert must be able to say, "I renounce them all."

4. *There is no unforgiven sin in believers.* As

repentance is the giving up of sin as sin, so forgiveness of sin is forgiveness of all sin. So far as we can see, the reasons which would render it right and safe for God to forgive any sin in any given case, would make it right and proper for him to forgive all sin in the same case. Every true penitent occupies the same position towards all his sin that he assumes towards any form of his sin. The faith which relies upon Christ for the pardon of any sin, does in that very act rely upon him for pardon of all sin. The Bible knows nothing of forgiveness of sin in installments. God forgives us "all that is past," if he forgives us at all.

5. *There is sin in believers whenever believers sin.* Whenever they, in any degree, yield to that which is known or believed to be contrary to the will of God, this yielding is in them sin. It may or may not be expressed in outward action; but if the will in any measure consents to that which is believed to be forbidden of God, this is sin in believers; it is sin in all moral beings. It is not inherited; it is not inevitable; it is voluntary, and hence it is sin. It is sin in believers just because believers sin.

6. It is objected to this view, that "believers

do not sin," and that, if there is any sin in believers, it must be something quite different from voluntary transgression of known law. But will it be seriously said that all Christians from the day of their conversion are sufficiently strong in faith, so that, as a matter of fact, they live steadily without committing sin? Is this the general testimony of Christian believers? Who answers that, from the hour of his forgiveness, he has never wavered in his loyalty to his covenant vows? What Christian is ready to deny that, many times since God spoke peace to his soul, he has grieved the Holy Spirit by, inwardly at least, consenting to evil suggestion, yielding to the appeals of fear or shame, appetite or passion, or by accepting some approach of this tempting world? We venture to say that the well-nigh universal testimony of Christian people is to the effect that, for a time at least, their conscious self-surrender was intermittent; that is, they sinned. *Abiding* in Christ is not the first lesson which converts learn. All true converts purpose unqualified obedience at the start; but with many, while their general purpose is not allowed to change, their consecration is more or less fluctuating,—some, until by later experience

they become "established, strengthened, and settled;" and many others, we are compelled to believe, through their whole Christian lives.

Besides, the Scriptural authority is not at hand for accepting the doctrine of a second kind of sin remaining in believers—a passive sin-existence—a sin without a sinner. We must think that sin is the *same in nature* in all beings. Sin *in* believers must be the sin *of* believers. It is that for which they are responsible, or it can not be their sin; and if it is sin in them, it is just like sin in others. That there is a great difference between Christians and those who are not Christians, in their respective attitudes of thought, feeling, and purpose towards what they regard as sin in themselves, is very true. By the one it is held in abhorrence, and when seen is quickly followed by sorrow and repentance; by the other it is viewed with indifference, or accepted and cherished. But this different attitude of the believer towards sin in no way proves that sin in him is different in nature from sin in any others. The difference between sin in a sinner and sin in a Christian has been pertinently compared to "the difference that there is between poison in a rattlesnake and the virus of

the serpent injected into a healthy man. The venom is natural in the reptile. He delights in it, secretes and cherishes it with pleasure. But all the vital forces of the man resist the injected poison, and rally to thrust it out of the system."¹ It is the same poison, however, in both the serpent and the man, and sin is sin in both the sinner and the Christian.

The fact that all sin is voluntary does not prove that all sin is deliberate and premeditated. It may be voluntary, and yet be a sudden departure of the will from its attitude of unqualified obedience under the power of temptation. In the believer this will be the case. Nor does the fact that it is voluntary imply that this sinful consent of the will is of long continuance. It may be a momentary yielding, followed by a quick return to Christ in penitence and faith. In believers this will very surely be the case. For all this, it is not less voluntary transgression, and still sin in believers is when believers sin.

7. It is objected also that St. John affirms that those who are born of God do not commit sin; and that, therefore, if there is any sin in

¹ Love Enthroned, p. 38.

believers, it must be something quite different from voluntary transgression. St. John does say: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he can not sin because he is born of God."² On this passage we remark: (1) It is evident that the apostle did not mean to teach that those who are born of God *never thereafter* commit sin. He assumes that they may and will sin, but encourages them to hope for a state in which they will not sin. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father."³ He tells Christians what to do when they see a brother sin. He does not claim this voluntary sinlessness for all the children of God, but only for those who are so far advanced that they *abide in Christ*: "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not;"⁴ thus clearly indicating that living without sinning is a higher and more mature spiritual state than all believers possess. It is straining this passage beyond all legitimate interpretation to make it mean that all regenerated souls are at once wholly saved from com-

² 1 John iii, 9.

³ Ibid. ii, 1.

⁴ Ibid. iii, 6.

mitting sin. (2) John also says in this connection that, "He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning." ⁵ He is refuting the error of those who claim that the practice of sin is not inconsistent with Christian piety. By committing sin, he does not refer to the sinful wavering of weak believers, but to a state of heart which allows and justifies the practice of sin, and yet assumes the Christian name. (3) It should be noted, also, that the passage under consideration not only states that those who are born of God do not commit sin; it states that they *can not sin*. No one will claim that the apostle means that, to those who are born of God, sin has become an absolute impossibility. The *can not* here affirms only that those who allow and practice known sin can not possess spiritual life. The passage shows the incompatibility of a spiritual state with a life of sin; but there is nothing to intimate that sin in believers must be some other kind of sin than that which is defined by John as "transgression of law." ⁶

In his answer to Mr. Dodd, Wesley remarks

⁵ 1 John iii, 8. ⁶ Ibid. iii, 4.

upon this subject thus: "I believe even babes in Christ, while they keep themselves, do not commit sin. By sin, I mean outward sin, and the word commit I take in its plain literal meaning. . . . This is no contradiction to anything I ever advanced. I everywhere allow that a child of God can and will commit sin, if he does not keep himself. . . . The only conclusion which I deny is, that all Christians do and will commit sin as long as they live."⁷

Wesley could hardly take any other view of this subject, for he tells us as a fact of his own experience that, only a few days subsequent to that memorable evening when his heart was "strangely warmed," he did "grieve the Spirit of God, not only by not watching unto prayer, but likewise by speaking with sharpness instead of tender love, of one that was not sound in the faith." And he adds, "Immediately God hid his face, and I was troubled."⁸ This was sin in a believer. In nature it was not unlike other sin, though quickly confessed and forsaken.⁹

⁷ Works, VI, pp. 535, 536. ⁸ Ibid. III, p. 75.

⁹ Whedon's Commentary on 1 John iii, 8, 9, contains the following judicious remarks: "*Committeth sin*—The opposite of *doeth righteousness* in the previous verse, and

both are in the *continuous present tense*, referring not to single subordinate acts, but to *predominate practice*.

"But the true meaning is simply this: The Gnostic, in his false regeneration, can consistently live in the practice of sin; but a Christian *can not* practice sin, for as a Christian he retains a regenerate principle incompatible with sin. He *can not* practice sin and stay a Christian."

"Whosoever is born of God is not doing sin, for his seed abideth in him, and he is not able to be sinning, because he is born of God."—*Translation of Alexander*.

"John having in mind one in whom the work of regeneration has been fully accomplished by the perfection of the regenerating principle of love, asserts the incapacity or inaptitude of such a soul, *while abiding in Christ*, to commit a known and willful sin."—*Love Enthroned*, p. 52.

Chapter VI

What Holiness Is Not

IN the light of the preceding discussion, we enter upon an inquiry concerning the nature of Christian holiness. In what does Christian holiness consist? We shall use the terms holiness, entire sanctification, and Christian perfection, not in their technical sense, but all of them as meaning the same spiritual state—a state of salvation from all sin. We shall first examine a view of this subject which has come to be quite commonly taught, and which may be stated in substance as follows:

At, and subsequent to regeneration, there exists in every believer “birth sin,” “inherited sin,” “an inbeing of sin,” “indwelling sin,” “remains of sin.” This sin, it is said, is not voluntary; it is the effect of ancestral sin; it is inherited. It is claimed that the grace of regeneration *controls* this sin-existence, but that it neither *removes* nor *destroys* it. That, in order to holiness, these effects of Adamic sin must be “removed,” “destroyed,” exterminated,” “extirpated,” “an-

nihilated," "consumed," and that entire sanctification consists in the removal or destruction of this "inbred sin." That when this "Adamic sin" is thus "removed," or "destroyed," then, and not till then, is the soul in a state of entire sanctification. On this view of the subject, we remark:

Christian holiness does not consist in the "removal" or destruction of the effects of ancestral sin.

1. With so much of this view as maintains entire sanctification to be a state attained subsequent to the hour of justification and regeneration, we fully agree. With an eminent writer upon this subject we say: "It is far more reasonable to suppose that the highest capacity of faith is attained after much exercise."¹

2. We also accept the fact that there are "in-

¹ Love Enthroned, p. 43.

"I speak of perfect love, or evangelical perfection, in which Adamic depravity is destroyed root and branch through the Holy Spirit."—*Half Hours with St. Paul*, p. 234.

"Choking down and repressing indwelling sin is not the process of cleansing the heart. Repression is not washing. The inward impurities repressed in regeneration, are removed by entire sanctification."—*Perfect Love*, p. 54.

"Regeneration introduces a power which checks the outbrealking of original into actual sin, except occasional

stantaneous uplifts" ² in Christian experience, in which Christ is revealed to the soul by the Holy Spirit in new and wondrous manifestations. Spiritual life at such times enters upon new planes, and that for which the soul may have long hungered comes to be realized in a moment. Spiritual growth is not mere natural development. It is not like that of vegetation. It is marked by epochs, in which there are deeper discoveries of need, higher reaches of faith, and richer manifestations of the Divine presence. These instantaneous uplifts are the never-forgotten steps in the soul's spiritual progress, and they often stand, in the mind of the Christian, as high above all experiences which have gone before them. This may and should be the realized experience of every believer.

and almost involuntary sallies in moments of weakness and unwatchfulness. Perfect love will cast out not only fear, but all the hateful progeny of depravity."—*Love Enthroned*, pp. 25, 37.

"What has become of indwelling sin in those entirely sanctified? It has not only been conquered, as is the case with all regenerate souls, but has been exterminated. In the entirely sanctified soul inbred sin is not merely suppressed, or conquered, but is cast out."—*Perfect Love*, p. 305.

² *Love Enthroned*, p. 93.

3. *The view of Christian holiness, which makes it to consist in the destruction or removal of the effects of Adamic sin, is based upon the assumption that the unavoidable effects of ancestral sin are themselves also sin.* We have already attempted to show that "inbred sin," "birth sin," so called, meaning by these terms the unavoidable effects of the sins of ancestors, near or remote, are not sin.³ These effects being not our sin, but the inevitable effects upon us of the sin of others, our holiness does not consist in freedom from them. Holiness does include freedom from sin; but the effects of the sin of others, in which we had no part or responsibility, so far as we are concerned, are not sin, and neither their destruction nor their removal can constitute our holiness.

4. *It follows that this theory makes Christian holiness to consist in deliverance from misfortune, rather than in salvation from sin.* The inevitable effects of parental sin are our misfortune; they are not our sin. In an exposition of this doctrine, recently published, written by one who defends the notion that holiness consists in the

³ See Chapter IV.

destruction or removal of "inbred sin," the writer says: "The carnal mind is that which was with us when we were born, and for which we are not accountable. It is inherited depravity. This misfortune or inherited depravity," etc.⁴ "Regeneration," he says, "does not change the carnal mind," but entire sanctification removes it. According to this theory, then, regeneration is salvation from sin, and holiness is salvation from misfortune.

The results of our own sins are also upon us, and are substantially the same in kind as those which have come upon us from ancestral sin, but even these results *are now* our misfortune. They are upon our bodies and minds, producing mental and physical conditions abnormal in char-

⁴ *Omaha Christian Advocate*, August 28, 1897.

"From analogy, then, and still more strongly from the consideration that God can not be supposed to be the direct author of evil, we infer that the moral death which man suffered was also the result of the natural operation of his moral nature, after he had become the subject of voluntary transgression."—*Philosophy of Christian Perfection*, p. 31.

"There are the absolute absence and non-existence of any alternative power, either in the intellective or sensitive nature. No physical causation is more absolute than that which exists between the object and its mental results."—*Whedon on the Will*, p. 14.

acter. We sinned in doing that which produced these effects. These effects themselves, like all the resultant echoes of misdoing, are *disaster*; not sin. The sin of the drunkard is not his unbalanced mind, his crippled body, or his fiery thirst; it is yielding to that which produced these dire results. Given the sin, the results follow by a law of necessity, which man did not make. But holiness is a state of salvation from sin, not deliverance from misfortune.

5. *If this theory of holiness be correct, it follows that entire sanctification is a work which involves no moral character whatever.* It locates its "inbred sin" not in the will, but in the sensibility—the susceptibility of feeling. As already shown, the operations of the sensibility come under the law of necessity, and hence possess no moral character. And yet, according to the view under consideration, that which distinguishes the work of entire sanctification from all else is, that it is a work wrought, not in the intellect, not on the will, but in the sensibility. If this be true, then entire sanctification must be a change, involving no essential change in moral attitude or character. This would mean that sanctification is a work possessing the characteristics of a physical,

rather than of a moral, transformation. This can not be correct.

6. The term "*removed*," as applied to what is called "*inbred sin*," is misleading in its tendency. The advocates of the view in question insist that, in entire sanctification, "*inbred sin*" is not merely repressed; not subdued only, but *removed*. They do not mean that the *guilt* of sin is removed, for with them "*inbred sin*" is "*guiltless sin*." It is not voluntary sin, for that is forgiven and put away the moment of regeneration. It is what is termed "*inherited sin*," which they insist is removed in entire sanctification. Just what the term *removed* stands for in the thought of different writers who thus apply it, is not easy to determine. It is quite clear, however, that with many who receive this theory entire sanctification means the removal of something from the soul, in as literal a sense as a cancer is removed from a diseased body. And what other concept would be so likely to be formed in the average mind, when the teachers of this theory speak of "*inbred sin*" as a "*sediment*," and compare it to seams of slate in veins of coal, or to roots and stumps of dead trees which must be pulled out, and when entire sanctification is said to be "a

piece of spiritual surgery to cut away the carnality?"⁵

By this theory "inbred sin" is located in the sensibility; it is excluded from all other faculties and operations. And yet, in no just sense is there anything to remove from the sensibility, in order to holiness. Sin has added nothing to it, and holiness takes nothing from it. The condition of the sensibility as the result of sin is that of derangement, disorder, perversion. Correction and readjustment are what is needed. An eminent writer upon this subject has well said:

"What, then, is that depravity of which regeneration is the incipient cure? It is no answer to say, it is original sin, carnality, fallen nature. These are names of it; but what do they stand for? We answer: they stand for a state of man's soul, which ensued upon the first sin as its effect. Not a physical effect, such as the addition or subtraction of some entity or faculty to or from it, but rather a change wrought in the order and harmony of its faculties, and in their relations to each other."⁶

"It has no new element; but the elements are

⁵ Half Hours with St. Paul, p. 161.

⁶ Christian Purity, pp. 123, 124.

wrongly adjusted. . . . The powers are all there; they have only become disordered, playing wrong or inefficient parts. . . . What is needed is, that right order be restored; the abnormal be made normal.”⁷

“There is undoubtedly a common mistake upon this subject, which confuses and distresses many minds, especially with regard to the propensities and passions. These, some imagine, are evil in themselves, and so conclude that they must be extirpated before entire sanctification can be enjoyed. It is not so. Every natural attribute and motion, both of the mind and body, is good in its proper use, and then only becomes evil when it is permitted to be the instrument of sin. It is not its existence that is sin, but its improper and unlawful use.”⁸

These quotations bear directly upon the point in question. They teach that the removal of something from the soul so strenuously insisted upon by the advocates of this theory as essential to entire sanctification, is not philosophical, and not the true idea of Christian holiness.

⁷Christian Purity, p. 126. ⁸Ibid. pp. 75, 76.

7. *The same may be said of the word "destroyed" and other cognate terms, as used in this connection.* None of them express the need of the depraved soul, or propose the proper remedy. Bad as the human heart is, there is nothing in it to destroy. Neither the sin of Adam, nor our own sin, has added any new power of desire or inclination. Sin has changed the direction of these powers, thrown them out of their proper relations, and wrought in them the ruin of disorder and death. Every appetite, every passion, every power of emotion now in man, if properly directed and held in its place, would be holy and good. The change needed in the sensibility is *correction*. There is much to reconstruct; there is nothing to destroy. From being the master of the reason and the will, the sensibility needs to be brought back to its place, as the obedient servant of both. God must be re-enthroned in the temple of the soul. When the will bows in unqualified loyalty to his authority, the work of restoration and reconstruction begins. Depravity is not a *creation*; it is *perversion*. It does not admit of annihilation; if it did, annihilation is not sanctification.

8. *The theory of entire sanctification, as stated*

above, depreciates the grace of regeneration. This tendency is both in the theory itself, and in the way in which it is usually taught. We are aware that this statement will not be admitted by those who accept the views here called in question. On the contrary, they claim that no others exalt justification and regeneration more highly than they. That they do not desire or intend to lower the standard of ordinary religious experience, we readily grant; but that the theory in question, and the manner in which it is more commonly taught, have this effect in many minds, we can not doubt.

(1) Writers maintaining this view frequently refer to those in ordinary Christian experience as "the merely justified,"⁹ "the merely regenerate."¹⁰ In works now before us, these expressions occur again and again, sometimes repeatedly upon the same page. Whatever these terms mean in the minds of the writers themselves, the practical effect upon others is to lower their ideas of all religious experience which goes no farther than justification and regeneration. There is an undertone in this phraseology which

⁹ Perfect Love, pp. 59, 60, 61, 64.

¹⁰ Christian Purity, pp. 263, 331.

conveys the impression that religious experience which falls short of this particular idea of holiness, does not amount to much.

(2) The description of an experience of entire sanctification, distinguished from that of regeneration by many who support the views under consideration, is to the same practical effect. A writer says:

“It is a state of rest from the former servitude to doubts, fears, and inbred sin. . . . It is a state of sweet rest from all conflict between the will and the conscience.”¹¹

According to this view, justified and regenerated souls are in a condition of servitude to doubts, fears, and inbred sin. Further than that, they are in a state in which their wills and their consciences are in conflict. Is this exalting justification and regeneration? Does a new and heavenly birth lift a soul no higher than a state of bondage to evil tendencies? Does it fail to bring into harmony his conscience and his will? The fact that this esteemed writer elsewhere defines regeneration beautifully and Scripturally, when speaking of that state only, is significant.

¹¹ Perfect Love, p. 128.

It is when comparing this with what he understands to be holiness, and making room for his theory, that he is led to depreciate the grace of regeneration. He gives way to the tendency of his theory. We do not wonder that Bishop Foster, though supporting substantially the same views of sanctification, discovers this hurtful tendency, and raises a note of warning at this point. He says:

“Do not depreciate the blessing of justification. Great wrong has been unwittingly done by unadvised teachings and expressions on the part of those who profess a higher state of grace with regard to ordinary Christian experience. This is, and always must be, fruitful of several injurious results.”¹²

(3) The theory before us represents pardoned and regenerated souls as unfitted for heaven. We do not mean that all the writers who support this theory take this position. There are some who do not, and are thus more in harmony with Scripture, but less logically true to their own theory. That holiness is the necessary preparation for heaven, none will deny. Men do not

¹² Christian Purity, p. 308.

go to heaven with sin on them or in them; and if it be true that the effects of ancestral sin, as we experience them, are our sin, then we must be saved from those effects in order to see God in peace. This is a logical conclusion from the position that inherited effects of sin become sin in us, and that holiness involves their removal or destruction. Justification and regeneration, then, are but an approach towards salvation, and preparation for heaven can be affirmed of only those in whom this "inbred sin" has been destroyed. The inextricable difficulties of this view have been already pointed out; the theory is here mentioned to show its manifest tendency to depreciate regenerating grace.

(4) Methodist writers who hold this theory maintain also that this grace, in which all "inbred sin" is removed or destroyed, may be lost. By some it is said that "it is very easily lost." We are also taught that persons losing this grace do not necessarily lose their justification and regeneration, but that they drop back into the state in which they were previous to their experience of entire sanctification."¹³ But if souls

¹³ Christian Purity, pp. 171, 263; Perfect Love, p. 292.

forfeit and lose this state of salvation from the existence of "inbred sin," this loss must result from the fact of sin. And does a sanctified soul fall into a justified state by committing sin? Is this not depreciating justification? And if a soul, in whom all the effects of ancestral sin have been destroyed, does fall into sin, is it not sin against superior light? Is not the guilt of sin graded by the light which is sinned against? In case a soul "merely justified" should thus sin against his light, would he retain his justified state?

(5) The very statement that justification and regeneration may be enjoyed while, at the same time, that which is called sin holds possession of the heart, depreciates these states, and often proves misleading. When "anger," "pride," "unbelief," "self-will," and other similar forms of sin are ranked as "inbred sin," and held to be compatible with a regenerated state, the Bible standard of Christian experience is manifestly lowered. There is little room for doubt that this teaching has led many to regard that as "inbred sin," and in no way incompatible with a justified state, which, in fact, involved the commission

of sin. If all men were honest and sufficiently discriminating to enable them to discern the precise point at which impulses and desires gain the concurrence of the will, the danger would be less. But it is easy to regard as Adamic sin that which is our own sin, and just like all sin. Selfishness, resentment, greed, and ill-will may be charged up as "inbred sin," and relegated to some process of removal or destruction, when they are in fact forms of the heart's sinning, demanding penitence and pardon.

(6) The same tendency appears in the manner in which the subject of *consecration* is presented by some who maintain the theory now in question. They are wont to speak of entire consecration as a *special condition* of receiving that entire sanctification which is supposed to remove or destroy the "inbeing of sin." *Entireness* of consecration is assumed not to exist in ordinary Christian experience. In a paper recently presented upon this subject before a Ministerial Association, the writer said:

"When the last point of resistance to the Divine will is reached and passed, then, and then only, by an act of faith in the cleansing blood,

do they receive the cleansing of the heart from inbred sin."

This statement would seem to imply that we may be in a justified state while in some things resisting the Divine will, and that entire acceptance of the will of God is only necessary in order to entire sanctification. This is certainly placing justification on very low grounds. Another writer, who has published several books upon this subject, in describing the state of a Christian believer who has not received this "blessing" of "inbred sin-destruction," says:

"There is in him still a remnant of rebellion—not universal, but partial rebellion. He will rebel in some things. He will obey the Lord on nine points, and rebel on the tenth. He will say *yes* to God on eleven points, and say *no* to God on one point. He has partial obedience." ¹⁴

That entire consecration is essential to entire sanctification, we readily admit. But entire consecration, *up to the measure of light*, is a condition of justification. Entire consecration, kept up to increasing light, is a condition of retaining a

¹⁴ Love Abounding, p. 209.

justified state. Consecration to God is, from its very nature, always entire *for the time*; that is, it is always up to light and capacity, or it does not exist at all. A consecration, known to be partial, and mixed with resistance to the Divine will, is no consecration at all. Any known reservation of will in consecration vitiates the act, and leaves the soul in an attitude of rebellion. It is true that consecration may and does mean more to a soul at every step in its spiritual growth. It means more at the first to some persons than it does to others; but with all persons, and at all times in their experiences, consecration *must keep pace with apprehended obligation*, or it fails to be consecration, and the soul falls into sin. Resistance to the known will of God in anything is sin—not “inbred sin,” but our own voluntary sin—just like all other sin.

To make an act of entire consecration a special condition of obtaining the “removal of inbred sin,” rather than a universal condition of being saved at all, implies that partial consecration may exist in connection with a justified state. This certainly lowers Christian experience to a dangerous standard, and it will inevitably encourage professed Christians in the be-

lief, which too many seem to entertain, that they are accepted of God, while they do not claim to have really and wholly surrendered themselves to his will.

(7) The testimony sometimes offered by those accepting this theory, concerning their former religious condition, reveals the same tendency to underestimate regeneration. We do not charge upon this theory all the utterances of those who embrace it, nor would we hold its prominent advocates responsible for all which is said by the leaders of "holiness meetings." But the practical tendency of this teaching is less seen in the books of its leading defenders than in the spontaneous utterances of those who read and follow them. By these a justified state is often represented as almost joyless, in which the soul is in bondage, in which duty is dreaded, and doubts become chills of despair. We give the following specimens of experiences from notes taken during a "meeting for the promotion of holiness:"

"I lived in a justified state six years; then I was sanctified, and if I had lost all I realized while I was in a justified state, I should not have missed it."

"All the time I was in a justified state I acted dishonestly with God."

"A converted and justified person is still carnally-minded, and at enmity with God."

Now, this language does not describe a regenerate state. At most, it pictures an awakened sinner under the law. It makes next to nothing of the great work of God in the salvation of a sinner. Persons viewing regeneration in such a light, may easily think themselves saved, when they are not. If they commence seeking entire sanctification in this state of mind, they may be misled. And if they hail the first visitation of light and peace as the evidence that their "inbred sin is removed," they may be still more seriously misguided.

(8) The Bible knows no such Christians as the "merely justified," or as the "merely regenerate." All genuine believers are both justified and regenerated. There is no *merely* in the case. As the result of their forgiveness and renewal in righteousness, they have "redemption through his blood, even [not merely] the forgiveness of sins."¹⁵ They are "born of the Spirit."¹⁶ They

¹⁵ Colossians i, 14.

¹⁶ John iii, 15.

are "new creatures"—a "new creation."¹⁷ They are "in Christ."¹⁸ They are "reconciled to God."¹⁹ They have "no condemnation."²⁰ They "have the Spirit of Christ."²¹ They are "in the Spirit."²² They are "children of God."²³ They are "made free from sin."²⁴ They are "saved."²⁵ They are "sanctified."²⁶ They have "passed from death unto life."²⁷ Christ is in them.²⁸ "The love of God is shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto them."²⁹ "Whether they live or die, they are the Lord's."³⁰ They are "holy."³¹ They are "delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son."³² They are "made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."³³

These and declarations of similar import are everywhere found in the New Testament. They are not descriptive of any particular class of Christians, but of all who are recognized as be-

¹⁷ 2 Corinthians v, 17. ¹⁸ Romans viii, 1. ¹⁹ 2 Corinthians v, 18. ²⁰ Romans viii, 1. ²¹ Ibid. viii, 9.
²² Ibid. ²³ Ibid. viii, 17. ²⁴ Romans vi, 18. ²⁵ Mark xvi, 16; Acts xvi, 31. ²⁶ 1 Corinthians vi, 11. ²⁷ 1 John iii, 14. ²⁸ 2 Corinthians xiii, 5. ²⁹ Romans, v. 5.
³⁰ Ibid. xiv, 8. ³¹ Colossians iii, 12. ³² Ibid. i, 13.
³³ Ibid. i, 12.

lievers. We must think that to represent these as filled with "indwelling sin"—anger, pride, unbelief; as enslaved to doubts, in conflict with conscience, and unfitted for heaven,—is not only to do violence to Scripture teaching generally, but to encourage the belief that the great salvation, as experienced by sincere penitents, amounts to very little.

9. *The theory in question tends to produce a superficial type of sanctification.* We presume that this remark will appear to some as not only incorrect, but as unpardonably unappreciative. It is often assumed that the opposite is true. The "destruction of inbred sin" is supposed to stand for a more thorough experience and a higher plane of spiritual life than is expressed or insisted upon by any other view of the subject. Not questioning the fact that many truly spiritual and saintly people accept this theory, nor speaking at all comparatively of their religious attainments, we must be allowed to think that the *theory itself* does not specially emphasize the highest element in Christian experience.

(1) It must not be overlooked that, according to this theory, "inbred sin" resides in the

sensibility. It is not claimed that the phenomena of the intellect are sin, and those of the will are certainly not *inbred*. It is maintained that entire sanctification consists in the "removal," or "destruction," of this "inbred sin." If this be the case, it is a work wrought in the sensibility. The sensibility is the susceptibility of feeling, and this view of sanctification necessarily emphasizes the states of the sensibility. Whatever may be the practice of some of its teachers, the theory itself logically attaches supreme importance to the movements and states of the sensibility. The sin and the holiness specially recognized by this theory are in the realm of appetite, passion, impulse, and desire. There is certainly room for the question, whether any doctrine which places such stress upon the passive elements of our nature, properly represents the highest and strongest type of Christian experience and character.

(2) As a practical fact, there is a tendency in this teaching towards a weakened type of piety. Bishop Hamline evidently observed this when he wrote: "But, alas! many of our preachers get happy rather than holy, and think more

of it.”³⁴ Another of our bishops has well said: “There is such a state of mind as consecration in feeling, where there is not consecration in fact.”³⁵ The same may be said of any mental operation; it may stop in the sensibility, and exhaust itself in emotion, wish, impulse, and desire. Repentance may exist so far as an apprehension of sin and corresponding feelings of dread and desire are concerned, and yet the will may hold to its wonted attitude of self-pleasing in disregard of duty. If we judge rightly, the number is not small of those who are *religious*, so far as intellectual conviction and sentimental feeling will carry them, while they wholly lack the all-essential element of self-surrender. Many appear to estimate the depth of their piety by the strength of their desires or the fervor of their emotional experiences. That is not a strong piety which is engrossed with its feelings, and exercises, and religious sensations. Where this is the case, the mind is often turned away from the supreme importance of the voluntary states, and becomes too carelessly observant of ruling motives and daily life. One of the prominent

³⁴ Biography of Bishop Hamline, p. 250.

³⁵ Address of Bishop Goodsell.

defenders of this view says: "I do not pay much attention to the details of life's duties; I believe for a clean heart, and leave my life to flow from this as streams from a pure fountain."³⁶ In the mouth of the man who said this, these words may not have meant careless living; but they nevertheless reveal a tendency in his theory which becomes sadly apparent in a multitude of cases.

(3) That is not the strongest type of piety which can be correctly defined as consisting in *a blessing*. "It is not a blessing which you need, but the Blesser," said Bishop William Taylor. And Bishop Thoburn has well said: "You will never keep anything which you call a blessing." The strongest piety is self-forgetful. It is not so much *getting something* as *giving all*. It is a ceaseless and joyful surrender of all to Christ, and thus making room for him in the soul and life. For some cause the phrases, "blessing of holiness," "second blessing," etc., have become standard terms in the nomenclature of this theory of sanctification. The views in question seem most naturally to express themselves in

³⁶ Entire Sanctification, p. 22.

this way; but they are not suggestive of the strongest and highest type of spiritual life.

(4) Pastors not unfrequently meet with those who are in trouble over what they understand to be their loss of the "blessing of holiness." Conscious of no known disobedience, they are bewildered with an apparent return of their former religious states. So far as our observation extends, a large part of those who are led to believe that they have experienced the removal of their inbred sin, soon come into the distressing fear that they have "lost the blessing." What is the explanation? They are sincere, and they realized a depth of peace and a sense of the Divine presence they had never before known. By the teaching at hand, they were led to accept their new blessing as the "removal," or "destruction," of their "inbred sin." By a law of mind, any strong emotion causes others for the time to disappear, and with them every passion and excitement of desire calculated to disturb the heavenly calm of their spirits for a time ceased to exist. But now they are in fear because of a subsidence in their religious feelings, and distressed over the fact that what they regarded as "exterminated" and forever "de-

stroyed" is again ready to betray them with its responses to tempting circumstances. They shudder at the thought that they were deceived, and that their new experience was unreal. It may not be true of all; but of many it is true, that their distress arises from their theory of what constitutes holiness. They regarded as "exterminated," "annihilated," that which admits of neither extermination nor annihilation, but only of constant and entire subjugation. Could they but see that their feelings change from various causes beyond their control, and that even the flashes and sallies of their sensibility in themselves possess no moral character, and are no evidence of spiritual lapse or loss, they would still go from strength to strength in the conquering and keeping power of a present Savior. But under the teaching in question, multitudes of God's dear children are hunting lost blessings, and sighing for a return of past experiences, unmindful of the truth that there is nothing higher or holier in earth or heaven than entire and continued obedience to the known will of God. God neither commands nor prohibits mere feeling.

10. *This theory misinterprets the Holy Spirit's*

work in sanctification. It teaches that his work is that of destroying or removing something from the heart of the believer. The language suggests the idea of some kind of physical operation upon the soul's substance. It is readily admitted that all salvation from sin is through the Holy Spirit; but his work in sanctification is a *constant work*. He does the first moment of holiness only what he does each successive moment afterwards, unless he is grieved away from the heart by sin. Sanctification from the Divine side is not so much any *one thing which he does* at a first moment, as it is the *all things which he is* to the soul at every moment. We are taught by the expositors of the theory in question, that the Holy Spirit must first "cleanse the heart from inbred sin," and that then he will come and dwell in it. But it is *his coming into the heart* which is the beginning of sanctification, and it is his abiding in the heart which continues that state. *His presence* in the body, soul, and spirit of the believer; not to destroy nor to remove, but *to possess*, is the true idea of the work of the Holy Spirit in sanctification. It is he who reveals Christ to the soul of the believer, as the object of immediate and continued faith. He

is divine illumination, and in his light believers see Christ made unto them a present and all-sufficient Savior. "He shall testify of me."³⁷ "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you."³⁸ It is Christ "who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."³⁹

The following passage from the work of Asa Mahan, places this subject in its true light:

"The Spirit sanctifies by presenting Christ to the mind in such a manner that we are transformed into his image. The common error of Christians, in respect to this subject, seems to be this—looking away from Christ to the Holy Spirit for sanctification, instead of looking for the Spirit to render Christ their sanctification."⁴⁰

The error to which President Mahan here alludes, is one into which the theory before us logically leads. If sanctification be a work of the Holy Spirit, destroying or removing a pas-

³⁷ John xv, 26. ³⁸ John xvi, 14, 15. ³⁹ I Corinthians i, 30.

⁴⁰ Mahan on Christian Perfection, p. 172.

sive existence from the soul of the believer, then it is not his *presence*, nor the revelation of Christ which he brings to the soul, so much as it is an *act* or operation of his in one given moment.

II. *The theory under consideration requires a classification of the children of God into two distinct bodies, distinguished from each other by the fact that in one "inbred sin" remains, while from the other it has been removed.* That the New Testament recognizes differences among believers is very true. Some are "babes," and others are of "full age;" there are "little children," and "young men," and "fathers." Some are "weak," and others "strong;" some are "tossed to and fro," and others are "faithful in Christ Jesus." But the difference insisted upon by this theory is none of these. It is the difference of still retaining "inbred sin," or having "inbred sin" removed or destroyed. We search the Scriptures in vain to find these two classes of believers, thus specifically distinguished. Evidence is easily found showing wide differences in Christian attainment; but we nowhere find the precise difference demanded by this theory. Great blessings are promised and received, and believers are

repeatedly "filled with the Holy Ghost," but in no case do we find one class of believers distinguished from a second as this theory requires, nor do we find any blessing which sustains to regeneration the precise relation of number two.

12. *If the theory in question be true, then those who are entirely sanctified, according to its definition of entire sanctification, can not be tempted to sin.* We do not claim that its advocates assert this; on the contrary, they deny it. Some of them teach that the entirely sanctified are more severely tempted than others, and not a little has been written by way of pointing out the differences between the temptations of those who are in this state and those who are not. What we claim is, that this theory so defines entire sanctification that those whom we may suppose entirely sanctified, *according to this definition*, can not, while in that state, be subject to temptation. It teaches that holiness consists, not in an entire and continuous control of the sensibility, but in an actual removal or extermination from the soul of all tendency or inclination towards a sinful act. Its defenders tell us that such as are in a state of entire sanctification may be

tempted, but that their temptations "are entirely from without."⁴¹

Now, here is no possible room for temptation. A temptation from *the without* can be no temptation at all until it reaches *the within*. Without a movement of the sensibility, responsive to the suggestion from without, and more or less inclining the soul towards the forbidden act, there would be nothing to resist, and hence no temptation. The inclination, the tendency, the excited desire, *is the temptation*. Outward objects are but the *occasions* of temptation. Propensity *is* tendency, and a marble statue could as effectually be tempted as a human soul from whom is exterminated all that can incline it towards what is sinful. To say, "I was tempted, but I felt not the least inclination or desire arise," is to assert a contradiction. The feeling of desire constituted the temptation. It was this which the soul was called upon to resist and overcome, and in its absence there could have been no temptation.

But the theory now under consideration claims for the entirely sanctified a removal or

⁴¹ Perfect Love, p. 61.

extermination of those states of the sensibility which could in any way respond to, or sympathize with, the objective temptation. This is to deny the possibility of temptation. It is to place the disciple above his Lord. This would seem to be admitted by one of the advocates of this view, when he says, "The virtue of a holy character lies not in a triumphant conquest over enemies, but in hiding in a fortress where fighting is unnecessary."⁴² If these words mean that all successful resistance to temptation is in the strength of Christ imparted to us, we admit their correctness. If they mean that no resistance to temptation on the part of an entirely sanctified soul is necessary, they teach that such souls are above the reach of what is really temptation. Paul evidently knew of no such religious state; he fought, and ran, and wrestled, and kept his body under.

13. Some of the most prominent representatives of the theory under review teach us that *no amount of growth in grace serves in any degree to remove or destroy "inbred sin."*

"While this growth and strengthening these

⁴² Entire Sanctification, p. 11.

graces may weaken and lessen the power of indwelling sin, it does not cleanse the heart or remove the cause of these inward antagonisms. Growth may abate its force, but can neither change its nature nor remove it from the soul.”⁴³

“Growth in grace, while accompanied by increasing power to abstain from *actual sin*, has no power to annihilate the spirit of sin, commonly called *original sin*.”⁴⁴

These writers teach us that the work of removing or annihilating “inbred sin” is an instantaneous work, and that “beyond entire sanctification, there is no increase in *purity*, as that which is pure can not be more than pure.”⁴⁵ It follows, then, that there can never be more than two degrees in sanctification—the lowest, which is regeneration; and the highest, which is entire sanctification. Between these least and greatest measures of sanctification, then, there is no removal, or destruction, or decrease of what is termed “inbred sin,” in any believer, in any degree; but every Christian either has no “inbred sin” whatever, or he has all he had at

⁴³ Perfect Love, p. 84.

⁴⁴ Love Enthroned, p. 331.

⁴⁵ Perfect Love, p. 56.

the moment of his regeneration. Is it, then, destroyed at all?

14. *This theory leaves unexplained the alleged fact that the work of sanctification is incomplete at regeneration.* It is admitted that the consecration of the repentant sinner is entire; that is, it is up to the measure of his capacity and light. Relatively to perceived obligation, it is at the moment of pardon all which it can ever become, though increasing light may, to him, deepen its meaning, and render it inclusive of many particulars not at first seen. One of the writers already quoted, when answering a question as to the difference between consecration at conversion, and consecration as a condition of sanctification, says: "They are essentially the same, each involving submission to God, and the true spirit of obedience."⁴⁶ He tells us that, "If we consecrate everything of which *we have knowledge*, we meet the gracious requirements of God's law, and reach the full measure of our obligation."⁴⁷

Now, the true penitent does consecrate all of which he has knowledge. It will not be claimed that he could do less, and be a true penitent.

⁴⁶ Perfect Love, pp. 106, 110.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Consecration, then, in its attitude towards God, is the same in all stages of Christian experience. It can never go beyond knowledge, and if it falls below present knowledge, it ceases to be consecration. So far as consecration is concerned, there is a complete work at conversion.

The pardon of sin which the penitent sinner receives, is also a complete pardon. However many and great his sins, they are all forgiven. No one will claim that God forgives sin a part at a time. The Holy Spirit at that moment comes into the soul and life, from which he had been excluded by voluntary disobedience, bearing witness to the fact of acceptance with God through Christ, and begetting the "life of God in the soul of man." Is this an incomplete work? If regeneration is "partial sanctification," why is it partial? Is it the will of God that it should be partial? We have seen that the attitude of the penitent soul towards God is precisely the same as when he is supposed successfully to seek the destruction of his "inbred sin." Why, then, is it not destroyed at the moment of regeneration?

It is said that the penitent sinner does not ask this; that it does not come into his mind, and

is not in his faith. No more is partial sanctification in his mind or faith. He is burdened with a sense of sin committed against God. He seeks forgiveness of sin, and peace with God, whom he has offended. And yet God partially sanctifies him, though he does not once think of sanctification in any degree. May we not rather believe that the God who "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,"⁴⁸ does sanctify the pardoned soul *for the time being*, though the strength to *abide in a permanent state of entire consecration* may be reached by subsequent and higher attainments? If, however, entire sanctification is an instantaneous work of the Holy Spirit, by which "inbred sin" is destroyed or removed from the soul, the statement that this work was begun in regeneration, but left incomplete, seems utterly without explanation.

⁴⁸ Ephesians iii, 20.

Chapter VII

Wesley on What Holiness Is Not

IT will be the object of this chapter to point out some particulars in which the view of Christian holiness, discussed in the preceding chapter, is not Wesleyan. It has been thought difficult to ascertain definitely what Wesley did teach upon this subject.¹ Some think they find evidence of changes in his views; others are positive that passages in his sermons can never be made to harmonize with the teachings of his "Plain Account."² Still others are certain that the theory in question is distinctively Wesleyan, and that any other view is not in harmony with primitive Methodism.

That Wesley modified his views upon some phases of this subject, is undoubtedly true; but we are not ready to pronounce him obscure, confused, or inconsistent with himself, nor are we convinced that the theory under discussion cor-

¹ Growth in Holiness, p. 10.

² Life of Bishop Gilbert Haven, p. 137.

rectly represents what that great and good man taught. On this point we remark:

1. We have already shown that the terms, "inbred sin," "indwelling sin," "inward sin," etc., as used by Wesley, must be understood in the light of his psychological system. That system made no distinction between the sensibility and the will. The operations of both were blended, and treated as belonging to the same class. He says: "And according to our judgments are our passions—our love and hate, joy and sorrow, desire and fear, with their innumerable combinations. Now, *all these passions together are the will*, variously modified; and all actions flowing from the will are voluntary actions; consequently they are good or evil, *which otherwise they could not be.*"³ No one at the present day would pronounce this philosophical statement correct; but it clearly shows that Wesley predicated sin only of what *he understood* to contain a voluntary element. His "inbred sin" was *sin*, because, according to his philosophy, it was in the will. Once make the distinction in Wesley's philosophy between sensibility and will, which mental

³ Works, VI, p. 202. See also Works, II, pp. 69, 134; VI, 208.

science now makes, and his "indwelling sin" and "inward holiness" both fall into the active states of the soul. This fact shows that, in those passages so frequently quoted from the writings of Wesley, in which holiness is said to consist in the removal of "indwelling sin," the concept is not that of a passive sin-existence, destroyed or carried away, but that of a *salvation from the commission of voluntary sin*. These passages support this theory in the sound of the words; not in the ideas which they were used to convey. When those who make the proper distinction between the passive and the active states of the mind, speak of holiness as consisting in the destruction of "inbred sin," they may use Wesley's words, and yet be far enough from reproducing his thoughts. In this particular the theory is not Wesleyan.

2. *Wesley taught that regeneration and entire sanctification were one and the same in kind, and that they differ only in degree.* The following passages may serve as samples of his teaching upon this point:

"Many persons that are not only upright in heart, but that fear, nay, and love God, have not spoken warily upon this head, not according to

the oracles of God. They have spoken of the work of sanctification, taken in its full sense, as if it were quite of another kind, as if it differed entirely from that which is wrought in justification. But this is a great and dangerous mistake, and has a natural tendency to make us undervalue that glorious work of God, which was wrought in us when we were justified.”⁴

“Love is the sum of Christian sanctification; it is *one kind* of holiness which is found only in various degrees, in the believers who are distinguished by St. John into ‘little children, young men, and fathers.’ ”⁵

“In asserting salvation by faith, we mean this: (1) That pardon, salvation begun, is received by faith producing works; (2) That holiness, salvation continued, is faith working by love.”⁶

Passages to the same effect are scattered through the writings of Wesley; but how can they be made to harmonize with the theory under consideration? This theory tells us that regeneration breaks the power of and represses “inbred sin,” but that it neither removes nor destroys it; that, on the other hand, entire sanc-

⁴ Wesley's Works, II, p. 221. ⁵ Ibid. ⁶ Ibid, V, p. 205.

tification removes, destroys, annihilates it. Is breaking the power of a thing the same in kind as putting it out of existence? According to this theory, regeneration and entire sanctification are quite unlike in kind. Controlling is not the same as destroying. Repression can not be expanded into annihilation. Those who maintain the theory before us, generally state that regeneration is sanctification begun; but when they come to define the difference in the two states, they sometimes at least virtually admit the point here made. A writer tells us that "the inward impurities *repressed* in regeneration, are *removed* by entire sanctification. Repressive power is nowhere ascribed to the blood of Christ; but purgative, cleansing efficacy. Entire sanctification is carnal nature *eradicated, destroyed, exterminated*, and not *repressed*. The Divine method of dealing with sin is by *extermination*, and not by *repression*."⁷ The italics are here given as they stand in the book.

This quotation bears upon the point in discussion, in the admission that regeneration and

⁷ Perfect Love, p. 54.

entire sanctification are different in kind; the one being a *repression*, the other an *extermination*.

3. *Nor is it Wesleyan to insist that sanctification is necessarily a work of removal or destruction, rather than a permanent subjugation.* If regeneration and sanctification are the same in kind, then it follows that both are of the nature of power over sin, or that both are degrees in the destruction of "inbred sin." And if, as this theory maintains, regeneration gives power over sin, but does not in any degree remove "inbred sin," then sanctification, being the same in kind, must give greater power over sin, but does not in any measure remove "inbred sin." If regeneration is the repression of "indwelling sin," then entire sanctification must be its entire repression; that is, continued, uninterrupted power over sin.

Two months before writing the sermon on "Sin in Believers," Wesley wrote the following:

"But is there no sin in those who are perfect in love? I believe not. Be this as it may, they feel none; no temper contrary to love, while they rejoice, pray, and give thanks continually. And whether sin is suspended or extinguished, I will

not dispute; it is enough that they feel nothing but love. This, you allow, we should daily press after. And this is all I contend for.”⁸

Wesley, then, did not insist that entire sanctification is essentially a work of destruction or annihilation of tendencies to sin. He would not contend for this; and yet the theory before us contends for nothing else so much as this. It is the one idea which distinguishes it.

Another English Methodist, perhaps not less able than Wesley himself, gives us the following as his conclusion from a study of the Bible upon this subject:

“This deliverance does not imply the annihilation of the inward tendency to sin, so that we shall no longer find it in us as a force against which we have to watch and contend. For, if Christ, by his own presence and power in our hearts, gives us constant and complete victory over the hostile force within us, so that it no longer consciously molds our acts, or words, or thoughts, we are already saved from all polluting power of sin. A tendency to evil, which is every moment trodden under foot, will cause us

⁸ Works, VI, p. 752.

no spiritual shame. Such victory the words in 1 John i, 7, certainly announce, and, I think, nothing more.

"It may suitably be called full salvation; or, as we look at its positive side, entire sanctification. But although day by day, as we trample them under foot, the inward forces of evil become weaker, and by their increasing weakness reveal our spiritual growth, yet I do not find anywhere in the Bible reason to believe that they may now, by our faith, or at any future time in our lives, be utterly annihilated." ⁹ This is Wesleyan doctrine as it was, and as it is.

4. *As Wesley described the new birth, it is a higher spiritual state than the theory in question allows it to be.* Wesley declares that every believer is "sanctified," "pure in heart," "a temple of the Holy Ghost," "saved;" that he "has the mind of Christ." This was his idea of a regenerate state. He says:

"As soon as his pardon or justification is witnessed to him by the Holy Ghost, he is saved. He loves God and all mankind. He has the mind that was in Christ, and power to walk as he

⁹ Holiness as Understood by the Writers of the Bible, p. 69.

walked. From that time (unless he make shipwreck of faith) salvation gradually increases in his soul." ¹⁰

"According to the whole tenor of Scripture, the being born again does really signify the being inwardly changed by the Almighty Spirit of God, changed from sin to holiness, renewed in the image of him that created us. And why must we be so changed? Because without holiness no man shall see the Lord." ¹¹

"Do you know what a Christian is? If you are a Christian, you have the mind that was in Christ, and you so walk as he also walked." ¹²

"If we are not free from sin, we are not Christian believers. For to all these the apostle declares: 'Being made free from sin, ye become the servants of righteousness.' " ¹³

"Is every man, as soon as he believes, a new creature, sanctified, pure in heart? Has he, then, a new heart? Does Christ dwell therein? And is he a temple of the Holy Ghost? All these things may be affirmed of every believer in a true sense." ¹⁴

"But without holiness no man shall see the

¹⁰ Wesley's Works, V, pp. 35, 36.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 572.

¹² Ibid. p. 88.

¹³ Ibid. VI, p. III.

¹⁴ Ibid. V, p. 205.

Lord—shall see the face of God in glory. Of consequence, the *new birth* is absolutely necessary in order to eternal salvation.”¹⁵

Those who maintain the theory of holiness under review are not accustomed to use the terms which Wesley, in the above quotations, employed, in their definitions of the new birth; nor do they generally apply to a justified state the Scripture passages which he here quotes. These terms are used by them to denote the state in which it is claimed that believers are “cleansed from all inbred sin,” and the passages which Wesley here cites as proof of the necessity of the new birth, are among those usually quoted for the purpose of showing that believers may and must experience the removal or destruction of their “inbred sin.” Why is this, if this theory is so eminently Wesleyan?

Definitions of regeneration are often met with in the writings of those holding the views here controverted, to which no exceptions can be justly taken; but when this state is compared with that in which it is claimed all inbred sin is destroyed, the new birth is often described in a

¹⁵ Wesley's Works, I, p. 404.

manner which places it far below the Wesleyan standard. We are told that "regeneration does not change the carnal mind;" that the "merely regenerate" are in a state of "partial obedience,"¹⁶ etc. This was not Wesley's view. Every one familiar with his writings is aware that, in describing the state of those who are "born again," he frequently employs the same phraseology which he uses in defining entire sanctification, and as frequently cites the same passages of Scripture in proof and illustration of both. This is certainly not the treatment of the subject suggested by the theory before us, nor is it the manner in which it is commonly presented by those advocating this view.

5. *Wesley taught that sanctification is both gradual and instantaneous.* For a time he evidently believed that this state is never attained instantaneously, but in all cases progressively. Later he accepted the truth that it is attained by simple faith, and that it may be attained at once. He always maintained, however, that all growth in grace is an increased degree of sancti-

¹⁶ "What is Holiness?" *Omaha Christian Advocate*, August 28, 1897.

Love Abounding, p. 209.

fication. He taught that it is instantaneous, in the sense that there is a given moment in which a dying man becomes dead, though he may have been some time dying.

The theory to which exceptions are here taken, requires a different view of the matter. It maintains that sanctification is a work of destruction, extermination, removal of "inbred sin." It teaches that, previous to the moment of this change, "inbred sin" had been only "weakened," or "repressed;" not in any degree removed or destroyed. It follows, therefore, that entire sanctification is, and in all cases must be, instantaneous, and that no such fact is possible as gradually increasing degrees in sanctification. The lowest and the highest are all the degrees possible. Nor does this conclusion seem in the least to trouble some who accept the theory. They teach us that "inbred sin is a unit, a simple evil principle, and can not be divided or subdivided and removed in parts;"¹⁷ that "growth in grace is a natural process;"¹⁸ that "growth in grace is neither a destroying, nor a washing, nor a crucifying, nor a cleansing process;"¹⁸ that

¹⁷ Perfect Love, p. 77.

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 80.

growth may abate the force of indwelling sin, "but can neither change its nature, nor remove it from the soul;"¹⁹ that entire sanctification is instantaneous in the same sense as regeneration; that, "in the work of simply cleansing from all sin, both of flesh and spirit, inbred and overt, there are no degrees, no progressive stages."²⁰

According to these teachings, after the moment of regeneration there is no removal or destruction of "inbred sin" in any degree, and consequently no higher degree of sanctification ever realized until the instant when it is all removed, and the soul is wholly sanctified. In contrast with these views, we present a few passages from the pen of Wesley, several of them from a collection of sermons which he revised with his own hand but three years before his death. No one will contend that his views upon this subject changed subsequent to that date.

"It is true, a late very eminent author, in his strange treatise on regeneration, proceeds entirely on the supposition that it is the whole gradual progress of sanctification No; it is

¹⁹ Perfect Love, pp. 82, 83.

²⁰ Quoted in Perfect Love, p. 81.

only the threshold of sanctification, the first entrance upon it. And as in the natural birth a man is born at once, and then grows larger and stronger by degrees, so in the spiritual birth a man is born at once, and then gradually increases in spiritual stature and strength. The new birth, therefore, is the point of sanctification, which may increase more and more unto the perfect day.”²¹

“All experience, as well as Scripture, show this salvation to be both instantaneous and gradual. It begins the moment we are justified in the holy, humble, gentle, patient love of God and man. It gradually increases from that moment . . . till in another instant the heart is cleansed from all sin and filled with the pure love of God.”²²

“But do we change directly from our first love into the highest union with God? Surely not. There is an intermediate state between babes in Christ and that of fathers.”²³

“When we begin to believe, then sanctification begins. And, as faith increases, holiness increases, till we are created anew.”²⁴

²¹ Wesley's Works, II, p. 390. ²² Ibid. p. 236.

²³ Ibid. V, p. 691. ²⁴ Ibid. p. 197.

"That a newly-justified person has at once, in that hour, power over all sin, and finds from that hour the work of God in his soul slowly and gradually increasing." ²⁵

"What, until he has power over more than all sin? No; but until he has more power over all sin; the struggle between the flesh and the spirit gradually decreasing, and till he has more peace, more joy in the Holy Ghost, more of the knowledge and love of God." ²⁶

"I believe Christian perfection is not attained by any of the children of God till they are what the apostle John terms fathers." ²⁷

"*Our old man*,—a strong and beautiful expression for that entire depravity and corruption which by nature spreads itself over the whole man, leaving no part uninfected. This, in a believer, is crucified with Christ, mortified, gradually killed, by virtue of our union with him." ²⁸

It would seem impossible to reach any other conclusion than that the theory in question is astray from Wesleyan teaching upon this subject. A recent "Life of John Wesley," now in

²⁵ Wesley's Works, VI, p. 634. ²⁶ Ibid. p. 640.

²⁷ Ibid. VI, p. 744. ²⁸ Notes on New Testament, p. 377.

the Courses of Study for both traveling and local preachers, contains a statement of what the author regards as the "special teaching of the great revival," in which the ministry of Wesley became so potent a factor. On the subject of sanctification he says:

"Entire sanctification was set in its proper light as the goal towards which every Christian should press. Wesley fixed no time and prescribed no methods for this work. He was content to urge his people to grow in grace and to strive to gain all the mind of Christ."²⁹

6. We do not understand Wesley to teach that those whom we may suppose to seek and desire *only partial* salvation from sin, would in that way realize gradual and progressive sanctification; but we do understand him to teach that sincere souls, with the full purpose to be right with God and man, may experience larger and higher measures of sanctifying grace before attaining entire sanctification. Nor can we see how he could have taught otherwise, taking into account his own experience, as related by himself.

²⁹ Telford's Life of Wesley, p. 112.

As early as 1725 he represents himself as seeing the necessity of holiness of heart and life, and as seeking it with undivided purpose.³⁰ In 1738 he says that he, with a little company of his friends, had been "praying for and expecting it for several years."³¹ The next year he wrote his first tract upon the subject, "placing in the front: 'Not as though I had already attained.'"³² In 1747 he wrote to Mr. John Smith: "I no more imagine that I have already attained, that I already love God with all my heart and soul and strength, than that I am in the third heavens."³³ In 1757 he wrote: "Anger, for instance, is natural to me; yea, irregular, unreasonable anger. I am naturally *inclined* to this, as I experience every day. Yet I can help it by the grace of God, and do so, as long as I watch and pray."³⁴ Now, if the *inclination* to anger is "inbred sin," as the theory before us so positively asserts, and if entire sanctification consists in its removal or destruction, then Wesley had not yet attained that state nineteen years after his conversion. He had, however, found grace to control his inclination

³⁰ Works, VI, p. 483. ³¹ Ibid. p. 486. ³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid. p. 655. ³⁴ Ibid. V, p. 547.

to anger, and he evidently recognized no sin in the controlled inclination.

In 1765 he wrote to a friend as follows:

"Now, whether you desire and expect this blessing or not, is it not an astonishing thing that you, or any living man, should be disgusted with me for *expecting it*, and that you should persuade one another that this *hope* is subversive of the very foundations of Christian experience." ³⁵

Again, in 1767, in his reply to Dr. Dodd, he says: "I have told all the world, I am not perfect. I tell you flat, I have not attained the character I draw." ³⁶ And yet, more than twenty years before, he relates precious seasons in which, after days unusually lifeless and heavy," he "found such light and strength as he never remembered to have had before." ³⁷ Again, he says:

"I felt such an awe and tender sense of the presence of God as greatly confirmed me therein, so that God was before me all the day long. I sought and found him in every place, and could truly say, when I lay down at night, 'Now I have lived a day.' " ³⁸

³⁵ Works, IV, p. 204.

³⁶ Ibid. p. 245.

³⁷ Ibid. III, p. 324.

³⁸ Ibid. III, p. 325.

This language is so impressively descriptive of sanctifying grace, that several writers have quoted it as evidence that Wesley "professed the blessing of holiness," though twenty-three years afterwards he tells Dr. Dodd and all the world that he had not attained it.³⁹ And if he had not attained it, according to the theory in question, he had no less amount of "indwelling sin" and no greater measure of sanctification than on the evening when his heart was "strangely warmed." This is not Wesleyan. Wesley must have been a believer in successive

³⁹ Perfect Love, p. 148.

It is but just to say that some writers who support substantially the views in question, do not admit that entire sanctification can not be attained through growth in grace. An able writer, from whom we have already quoted, says: "That growth in holiness, from the degree of it imparted in regeneration, is progress towards the completeness of it in entire sanctification, we can not conceive a Christian understandingly to deny."

"We think in all these respects the analogy holds substantially, and must hold, therefore, that the way to the end, or full corn in the ear, in the spiritual as in the natural, is along the line of growth; it is reached by and not without progress; it is growing up into Christ; it is first babes, then men; it is going on to perfection; it is hungering and thirsting, and being filled. We have no favor for the sentiment that growth in grace is not growth toward entire holiness."—*Christian Purity*, pp. 185, 187.

and progressive measures of sanctifying grace, and that he did attain abiding holiness of heart and life, the spirit he manifested, the life he lived, the sacrifices he made, and the abuses which he meekly suffered for Christ's sake, abundantly prove.

Chapter VIII

What Holiness Is

THE preceding chapters have been written for the purpose of opening the way for the presentation of what we regard as the true theory of Christian holiness. We have endeavored to show that it does not consist in the passive states of the mind, that it can not consist in any phenomena or condition of the intellect or the sensibility, nor in any work of destruction in the operations of either.

We shall now attempt to show that Christian holiness, on the human side, belongs to the voluntary states of the mind, that it consists in an abiding state of the will. In submitting a definition, we will say that Christian holiness is *a state of unreserved consecration of the being to God, secured through the constant revelation of Christ to the soul of the believer by the Holy Spirit*. It is distinguished from an *act of consecration* by the feature of *continuousness*. It includes *living* consecration, uninterrupted faith in Christ as a present and sufficient Savior from

sin, and a continuous presence and incoming of the Holy Spirit in the soul of the Christian. It is abiding in Christ. It is such a Divinely-strengthened state of the soul, that the will stands in a "supreme preference for God." It is that state in which the will constantly chooses the will of God as the law of its entire activity. In a word, it is voluntary and continuous obedience to all the known will of God, a state in which the believer *does not commit sin*.

On the Divine side it is not so much what the Holy Spirit does in the believer at any given moment, as what he does and what he is at each and every moment. It is his pervading presence, revealing Christ to the soul as all-sufficient for its utmost exigency, and thus strengthening us to abide in unbroken acceptance of the will of God. It is Christ conquering *in* us as he conquered *for* us. It is that state in which, by the power of God through faith, the Christian believer is *kept from committing sin*. In support of this view of Christian holiness we offer the following remarks:

1. *Holiness is the exact opposite of sin.* We have endeavored to show that sin is all and always voluntary transgression of law. If this be

so, it follows that holiness is voluntary and entire obedience to the known will of God. If, on the other hand, there are two kinds of sin, there must be two kinds of holiness. But if sin is disobedience to the known will of God, then holiness is entire obedience to the apprehended will of God. "All sin has its seat in the will. The appetites and passions and intellectual aspirations are not sins. They belong to the original furnishings of the soul. Sin is volitional indulgence in contravention of law."¹ Holiness, then, is salvation from indulgence in contravention of law, and, by consequence, obedience to known law.

2. That distinguished scholar, Joseph Agar Beet, has shown that *the idea of holiness in the Old Testament is that of "standing in a special relation to God."*² Whatever was by law set apart to God and his service was counted and called *holy*. The tabernacle and its furniture, Aaron and his sons, the Nazarite, the first-born, all Israel, the Sabbath, and even Mount Sinai, were all sanctified—*holy*, because set apart, con-

¹ Philosophy of Christian Experience, p. 59.

² Holiness as Understood by the Writers of the Bible, pp. 17, 18.

secrated to God and his service. When spoken of intelligent beings, it claims of them, or implies concerning them, that they are personally self-surrendered to God and his service.

The same idea of holiness is carried forward into the New Testament. All who, by confession of faith in Christ, declare themselves to be his, are called holy.³ They are saints (holy ones) in Christ Jesus.⁴ They are the "first-born," whom God rescued from the destroyer, and whose "names are written in heaven."⁵ They belong to God and, hence, are holy.⁶ In the Epistles the idea rises often to that of an actual realization in experience and life of this consecration to God. Christians are not only spoken of as belonging to God by right; they are declared to be actually his by personal devotion of their all to him, or are exhorted and encouraged thus to consecrate themselves to him. The Old Testament idea of holiness is not discarded; it is developed. As the temple and its priesthood and the sacrifices were holy be-

³ Colossians iii, 12.

⁴ I Thessalonians v, 27; Hebrews iii, 1; I Corinthians xiv, 33; Ephesians i, 1, 15.

⁵ Hebrews xii, 23. ⁶ I Corinthians ii, 16, 17.

cause consecrated to God, so Christians are "the temple of God,"⁷ "an holy priesthood," "an holy nation,"⁸ "living sacrifices."⁹ "To this original reference of the Word we must ever recur, if we wish to think of holiness as it was understood by the early Christians." "But the complete idea of holiness is realized in them only so far as their entire activity of body and mind are the outworking of a single purpose to accomplish the purposes of God. It has been well said that purpose is the autograph of the mind. Wherever purpose is, there is mind. And wherever mind is directed toward the great source of mind, there is holiness."¹⁰ Holiness, then, according to both Testaments, is a state of entire consecration to God.

3. *This view of Christian holiness recognizes and necessarily implies the very distinctions in Christian experience and character which are taught in the Bible.* The fact has already been noticed that the twofold classification of believers into somewhat distinct bodies, distinguished by the specific fact of the existence or non-existence in

⁷ 1 Peter ii, 5. ⁸ Ibid. 9. ⁹ Romans xii, 1.

¹⁰ Holiness as Understood by the Writers of the Bible, pp. 43, 46.

them of "inbred sin," does not appear in the Scriptures. But the Bible does recognize the fact that some Christian believers are weak and wavering, that they have need to be "confirmed,"¹¹ to be "established, strengthened, settled."¹² They are exhorted to "grow up into him [Christ] in all things,"¹³ to "go on unto perfection,"¹⁴ to be "made perfect,"¹⁵ to be "holy."¹⁶ They are encouraged to expect a realization of a state of entire sanctification, in which they may be preserved blameless; that is, in which they will commit no known sin.¹⁷ The converts of the New Testament stand before us essentially like those of our own day, ardent and sincere, but not in a state of constant, unbroken obedience to God. They committed more or less sin. The differences in Christian experience recognized in such passages are the differences between a weak and wavering state, in which sin is sometimes committed, and a state in which the high Christian privilege is realized of being saved and kept from all sin.

It is true that believers are exhorted to

¹¹ Acts xiv, 22. ¹² I Peter v, 10. ¹³ Ephesians iv, 15.

¹⁴ Hebrews vi, 1. ¹⁵ Ibid. xiii, 21. ¹⁶ I Peter i, 15.

¹⁷ Thessalonians v, 23.

“holiness,” to “sanctification,” and are encouraged to expect that they shall be “sanctified wholly;” but this in no way proves that the holiness and sanctification here enjoined and promised consist in the destruction or removal of an “inbeing of sin.” There is nothing in the passages alluded to in reference to a “second blessing” of “inbred sin” destruction in distinction from a previous or partial one of “inbred sin” subjugation. It would seem impossible so to construe their meaning by any whose minds were not preoccupied by the thought.

“Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you; abide in me.”¹⁸ “Awake to righteousness, and sin not.”¹⁹ “These things write I unto you that ye sin not.”²⁰ “Now, I pray to God that ye do no evil.”²¹ “Abstain from every form of evil.” (R. V.)²² “If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.”²³ “Now, the God of peace . . . make you perfect in every work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight.”²⁴ “Whoso keepeth

¹⁸ John xv, 3, 4.¹⁹ I Cor. xv, 34.²⁰ I John ii, 1.²¹ 2 Cor. xiii, 7.²² I Thess. v, 22.²³ James iii, 2.²⁴ Hebrews xiii, 21.

his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.”²⁵ “But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you and keep you from evil.”²⁶ “To the end that he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God.”²⁷ “Rooted and built up in him and established in the faith.”²⁸ “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God, your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless.”²⁸

These passages fairly represent the address of the New Testament to Christian believers, and yet there is not a word in them in reference to any extermination of an “inbeing of sin;” nothing is said about two kinds of sin, nor of any two kinds of sanctifying work upon the soul. The holiness here enjoined and prayed for is that state in which Christians “sin not,” are “made perfect in every good work,” “made perfect in love,” “kept from evil,” “established unblamable,” “rooted and grounded in love,” “sanctified wholly,” “preserved blameless.” Sin appears here, as everywhere in the Bible, and holiness, perfected love, sanctification, as that state

²⁵ 1 John ii, 5. ²⁶ 2 Thess. iii, 3. ²⁷ 1 Thess. iii, 13.

²⁸ Colossians ii, 7. ²⁸ 1 Thessalonians v, 23.

in Christian attainment in which believers do not commit sin.

4. *This theory of holiness makes the true distinction between regeneration and entire sanctification.* It is not that the work of regeneration is a partial, an incomplete work. It is not that there are two kinds of sin, active and passive, the one forgiven at regeneration, the other "weakened" only at that time, but later destroyed or removed in entire sanctification. It recognizes but one kind of sin actual or possible—"voluntary transgression of known law." It teaches that every regenerated soul is, *for the time being*, consecrated to God up to the full measure of knowledge, and is sanctified—holy. It allows, however, that few, if any, believers do, at the first moment of regeneration, possess such a measure of spiritual strength as to abide without interruption in this entire sanctification. It admits that they are "children, tossed to and fro," ²⁹ and that, under temptation, they, for a time at least, commit more or less sin; that they have need to be "strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell

²⁹ Ephesians iv, 14.

in their hearts by faith," ³⁰ but that, if they "cast not away their confidence," ³¹ but "as they received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him," ³² they will attain an abiding state of entire consecration in which they will commit no known sin. This is holiness—entire sanctification. It is the same *in kind* as regeneration, differing from it in the fact of continuousness—permanency. It is not claimed that it renders sin impossible to the believer or that it is never forfeited by any who enter this "glorious liberty," but that it is so characterized by constancy and continuousness, that it may be truly termed *a state of abiding, permanent consecration*.

5. *The view of holiness here presented gives a clear idea of the sense in which sanctification is both the work of God and the work of man.* If the work of sanctification consists in the destruction or removal of the effects of Adamic sin, in no just sense can it be said to be the work of man. At most, man could only comply with the conditions upon which God may be supposed to do the work. But the Bible attributes *the work itself* to men. Hebrews sanctified their houses or

³⁰ Ephesians iii, 16, 17.

³¹ Hebrews iii, 14; x, 35.

³² Colossians ii, 6.

fields.³³ Priests were required to sanctify themselves.³⁴ All the people of Israel were commanded to sanctify themselves and make themselves holy.³⁵ This self-sanctification is enjoined from the consideration that the Holy God, whom they served, sanctifies them.³⁶ God had chosen them, set them apart as his own people, and they must set themselves apart—consecrate themselves to him. He is their God; they must be his people. They must do as he does; be as he is. We meet the same thought in the New Testament. The members of the Church at Corinth are addressed as “them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus.”³⁷ This address was justified by Scripture usage, for they were “called to be saints,”—holy people.³⁸ As a matter of fact there were those among them who were far enough from realizing this holiness in their experiences and lives, and they are admonished to “cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”³⁹ God had called them out of the world unto himself; he had set them apart as his own

³³ Lev. xxvii, 14, 16.

³⁴ Ex. xix, 22.

³⁵ Lev. xi, 44.

³⁶ Exodus xxi, 8; xxxi, 13; Leviticus xx, 7, 8; Ezekiel xx, 12.

³⁷ I Corinthians i, 2.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ 2 Corinthians vii, 1.

“sons and daughters,” and they must “come out from among them,” setting themselves apart unto him in clean and holy living.⁴⁰

6. *This view of sanctification affords a clear idea of the sense in which holiness is affirmed of the bodies as well as the souls of believers.* It will not be claimed that the effects of ancestral sin, as those effects exist in our bodies, are either wholly destroyed or removed in entire sanctification. And yet we are under the same requirement to be holy in body, that we are to be pure in heart. Sanctification of the body is as specifically promised as sanctification of the spirit. If the essential idea in entire sanctification is that of a destruction of the effects of Adamic sin, it is difficult to attach any meaning to such a requirement or promise which is not disputed by known facts. On the other hand, if entire sanctification is a state of entire consecration, both the requirement and the promise are easily understood and as easily applied. They mean that Christians are to “glorify God in their bodies and in their spirits, which are God’s;”⁴¹ that they are to “present their bodies, a living sacri-

⁴⁰ 2 Corinthians vi, 17, 18.

⁴¹ 1 Corinthians vi, 20.

fice, holy, acceptable unto God." As Paul expresses the meaning: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."⁴² That is, the principle of consecration is to be applied to the body and its powers. The body is to be used according to the apprehended will of God. This is sanctification as applied to the body, and the same in principle as when applied to the soul.

7. *A state of entire consecration is loving God with all the heart.* Loving God with all the heart is a standard definition of holiness to which none will object. But is a state of entire consecration to God what the Bible means by loving him with all the heart? Loving God is not an emotion, though it may be accompanied by emotion in varying degrees. Considered as a feeling, it may be intense or faint, according to intellectual and even physical conditions. Love

⁴² Romans vi, 12, 13.

to God, considered as a voluntary state, may remain the same through all variations and conditions of feeling. Supreme love to God, in the Scriptural sense, may be full to the measure of recognized obligation and permanent in all conditions and degrees of feeling. Love to God is *commanded*. But God does not command states of feeling. They exist as results of conditions, often beyond our own control, and always under the law of necessity. God's commands are directed towards that which can obey, and so far as voluntary states are concerned, men can obey. If emotions were commanded, men could not obey, for every one knows that he can not directly control the feelings by the action of his will. The commands to repent, believe, consecrate, love supremely, all imply that they can be obeyed by proper voluntary action. Obedience to these commands will be accompanied by such states of feeling, as in any given case are conditioned upon it and upon the work of the Holy Spirit attending it. To these feelings themselves there is no moral character whatever, however they may be produced. They are not love to God, though they may be, in some sense and measure, the result of it. To love God su-

premely is voluntary to yield the whole being to him in continuous consecration and trust, and this is Scriptural holiness.

8. *The correctness of this view is further shown by the nature of Christian love to man.* In the command which requires us to love God supremely and our neighbors as ourselves, there is no intimation that the love which we are required to render to God is different *in kind* from that which we are to render to man. Our relations to God being entirely unlike those which we sustain to our fellow-men, the application of love in the one case differs essentially from what is required in the other; but psychologically the love enjoined in both cases is the same. What, then, is the nature of that love which we are required to exercise towards our fellow-men? And what is that state of mind in which our obligations to our neighbor are fully met? Love to our fellow-men, from a Christian point of view, is certainly not an emotion, a mere feeling. It is not the love which exists between the sexes, nor the love of parents for their children. It is nothing constitutional or of the nature of impulse. It may be attended by feelings of various kinds and degrees, of admiration

or sorrow, pity or disgust, according to our apprehensions of given characters. These feelings, however, are no part of Christian love to man. Perceived differences of character shape the application of love to man, but do not change its nature. Scriptural love to man is the same in nature towards all men; the same through all kinds of views and feelings concerning them. It is the consecration of ourselves to the promotion of their highest good, an unselfish devotion to their well-being. It is in this sense that we are to love our enemies and do good to those who hate and persecute us. Nothing is said in reference to the mere feelings which may arise in us towards those whom we know to be wicked. What is required of us, in order to fulfill the law of love, is a self-sacrificing devotion to their good, as we apprehend it, and to the extent of our ability. This is love to man, as entire and continued consecration to the will of God is supreme love to him. Both are voluntary states of mind; both are really the same state. It is a state of unreserved consecration to the glory of God and the good of man; and this is holiness.

9. *A state of entire and permanent consecration*

to God meets all the requirements of God's law. We have already shown that it is loving God with all the heart and our fellow-men as ourselves, and we have the explicit declaration of our Lord that "on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."⁴³ It is this love which Paul affirms to be the "fulfilling of the law."⁴⁴ It is entire obedience to the known law of God. This is all man can render; it is all God requires. The human intelligence affirms by its own laws that when the whole being is purposely surrendered to the will of God, all possible obligation is met. The little or the much which in any given case is thus devoted to God, is nothing to the question. Since it is *all* in each case, it is *the same* in every case. It is all Adam could do in his primitive condition; it is all his children can do in their weakened and disordered state. It is all the law of God requires of child, man, or angel. Entire and continuous consecration, then, is entire obedience to God's law as it is apprehended; and this is holiness of heart and life. We do not overlook the fact that, as a result of this

⁴³ Matthew xxii, 37.⁴⁴ Romans xiii, 10.

consecration and harmony with God, cognate phenomena of the sensibility are brought into existence; but we do insist that, however intense or ecstatic these passive states may become, in themselves they possess no moral character. The law of God neither commands nor prohibits mere feeling. It deals with voluntary states. It requires full obedience,—entire consecration of the being to Him; that is, *holiness*.

10. *The love of God to men is of the nature of voluntary choice of their highest good.* He can not admire or approve sinful beings; his love is not an impulse or emotion. His infinite nature goes forth ceaselessly in voluntary good-will to men. He seeks—wills their highest good. He does all to save and bless them which, man being what he is, can be done. We write it with reverence, but with a profound conviction of its truth, God consecrates himself to the highest well-being of his creatures. If the human mind is constituted at all after the Divine, and we think it is, the feelings of God towards sinful men must be anything but admiration and complacency. Still he ceaselessly loves men in all their treason and guilt. For man he lays upon himself an infinite burden of self-sacrifice. Jesus,

from the manger to the cross, is the proof and illustration. He voluntarily suffers to secure their salvation. He bids us love men as he loves them, by devoting ourselves to their welfare. The holy, perfect love of God to man is a voluntary but permanent state of the Divine will; and holiness in man is a voluntary but constant state in harmony with the will of God.

II. *This view of Christian holiness is indicated by those passages which teach that believers are sanctified through the truth.*

If sanctification is a work of Divine power by which "inbred sin" is instantaneously destroyed or removed, it is not easy to perceive the sense in which believers are sanctified through the truth. And yet Jesus prayed for his disciples: "Sanctify them through thy truth."⁴⁵ He said that for their sakes he sanctified himself, "that they also might be sanctified through the truth."⁴⁶ Nor does he intimate that his own sanctification was different in kind from that which he sought for his disciples. He prayed that they *also* might be sanctified, along with

⁴⁵ John xvii, 17.

⁴⁶ Ibid, xvii, 19.

him, and as he was. If sanctification consists in a state of entire consecration, into which believers are led by the Holy Spirit revealing the truth of God to their minds, the sense is clear. This in no way excludes the work of the Divine Spirit. He is the Spirit of Truth. He works through the truth, of which Christ is both the source and the substance. His presence in the soul of the believer is light, and in this light the Christian sees, trusts, and appropriates the truth. Thus is he sanctified through the truth. On these words in the prayer of Jesus, Godet remarks:

“In the new covenant, where all is spiritual, the seat of consecration is above all the heart, the will of the consecrated person. Jesus, therefore, in saying *sanctify them*, asks for them a will entirely devoted to good—that is, to God and his service, and consequently to the task which God gives them to discharge in this world. All their forces, all their talents, all their life, are to be marked with the seal of consecration to this great work, the salvation of men; a thing, which implies the renouncing of all self-gratification, however lawful it may be; the absence of all in-

terested aims, of all self-seeking. *This is the sublime idea of Christian holiness.*" ⁴⁷

12. *This state of perfect and permanent consecration was the holiness of our Lord.*

He sanctified himself. He certainly did not destroy or remove any "inbeing of sin" from within himself; that was not sanctification in his case. But, as already remarked, he gives no intimation that the sanctification of his disciples was, in principle or kind, different from his own. He did consecrate himself. It was he whom "the Father sanctified and sent into the world." ⁴⁸ For that reason he is "the Son who is consecrated for evermore." ⁴⁹ Jesus claimed no other holiness than this. He asks, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" ⁵⁰ "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." ⁵¹ "I seek not mine own will, but the

⁴⁷ Commentary on John ii, 336.

"Sanctifying human souls should not be considered a mystical process, in such a sense mysterious that we can get no clearly-defined conception of it. The fact that it is effected through the truth brings it within the pale of our own consciousness—a subject of study and of distinct intellectual apprehension."—*Cowles's Gospel and Epistles of John*, p. 256.

⁴⁸ John x, 36.

⁴⁹ Hebrews vii, 28.

⁵⁰ John viii, 46.

⁵¹ John iv, 34.

will of the Father which hath sent me.”⁵² That awful hour in Gethsemane, when his whole being cried to heaven for relief from the unutterable horrors which he endured, never drew from him a prayer which did not first ask that the will of God might be done. There is nothing holier in earth or heaven than this state of mind.

The apostles note this holiness of Jesus. Paul tells us that “even Christ pleased not himself.”⁵³ When the same apostle exhorts Christians, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,” he is particular to state what he means,—a mind so unswerved in its devotion to the will of God and the welfare of man, that “he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”⁵⁴ Peter says of him that “He did not sin; neither was guile found in his mouth.”⁵⁵ “Thus from the great Author and Archetype of renewed humanity we have obtained a complete conception of holiness. We have seen a man, though God yet perfect man, whose life was a constant and perfect realization of one purpose—a purpose to use all his powers, time, and opportunities to advance the king-

⁵² John v, 30.⁵³ Romans xv, 3.

■ Philippians ii, 5-8.

⁵⁵ I Peter ii, 22.

dom of God; and we have seen that this purpose was a result of an intelligent comprehension and full approval of the Father's purpose. In virtue of this intelligent, hearty, continued appropriation of the Father's purpose, and in virtue of its realization in all the details of the Savior's life, he was called the Holy One of God."⁵⁶

13. *It is a significant fact that several writers who define holiness as the destruction or removal of "inbred sin," at times appear to concede that it belongs wholly to voluntary states.*

This fact is suggestive of the truth of the doctrine here set forth. In a work from which we have several times quoted, and in which "inbred-sin" removal is insisted upon as the essential feature of entire sanctification, the writer says: "In the holy, unfallen soul the superior ruled and regulated the inferior, and it is this order which constitutes that soul a holy soul."⁵⁷ But the fact that "conscience and will" rule the propensities and appetites constitutes an un-fallen soul holy, does it not equally constitute a redeemed soul holy?

Another tells us that "sinning and repenting"

⁵⁶ Holiness as Understood by the Writers of the Bible, p. 39. ⁵⁷ Christian Purity, p. 124.

is a "prominent characteristic" of those who, as he expresses it, "refuse to seek the blessing of holiness."⁵⁸ *Refusing* to seek holiness must constitute one a constant sinner. But if the writer means that until entire sanctification is attained, believers do commit more or less sin, and that holiness is that state in which they do not commit known sin, he teaches the very doctrine here maintained.

Again, "the philosophy of this whole subject lies in few words. The work of the Divine Spirit is chiefly, if not wholly comprised in a rectification of the will."⁵⁹ According to this statement, if the will is wholly and constantly right, all the soul is holy. So let it be.

In another work the same able writer says: "Holiness in men is perfect self-devotement to God and to his Son, our adorable Savior, and to our fellow-men."⁶⁰ That is, in other words, it is entire consecration of our being to God and the good of mankind.

"You get the faith of conversion established, that is perfect faith." It is then the *abiding*

⁵⁸ Perfect Love, p. 217.

⁵⁹ Love Enthroned, p. 86.

⁶⁰ A Defense of Christian Perfection, p. 26.

feature of saving grace which constitutes its perfection.⁶¹

"Holiness in a human soul is a perpetual radiation from the Sun of righteousness. In other words, it is a state of mind resulting from the pervading presence and governing power of the Holy Spirit."⁶² *Governing power* is the work here ascribed to the pervading presence of the Holy Spirit. The writer is here defining entire sanctification, though in other places he maintains the "inbred sin" destruction view.

"Perfect love is *constant* love. If not constant, it is not perfect. There may not always be ecstatic joy, but there must always be a supreme preference for God."⁶³ *Constancy*, then, is the element which distinguishes perfect love. *Supreme preference for God*—a constant choosing of his will and glory—is the great essential in Christian holiness, and this is all and always a voluntary state.

"The test of your spiritual condition is not to be sought in your emotional state; it is simply a question of your complete harmony with the

⁶¹ Love Abounding, p. 300.

⁶² God's Method with Man, pp. 152, 153.

⁶³ Perfect Love, p. 66.

mind and will of God.”⁶⁴ Holiness, then, is not in states of the sensibility, but in voluntary harmony with the will of God.

“Now, he seeks and obtains sanctification. He is not going any different road from before, but he is going easier, because the Divine will is his will.”⁶⁵ The writer of this passage is stating the difference between the experience in regeneration and that in entire sanctification. It will be seen that the fundamental difference upon which he insists is that of a constant choice of the Divine will.

Quotations of similar import could easily be multiplied, taken from the writings of those who purposely maintain that holiness consists in a removal or destruction of “inbred sin.” They indicate that the mental conceptions of this state in the minds of these able men lead them, sometimes at least, to describe it as consisting in voluntary and abiding consecration to God. We shall, in the next chapter, inquire whether the views here advocated are according to Wesleyan teaching.

⁶⁴ *God's Method with Man*, p. 169.

⁶⁵ *Christian Witness*, December 10, 1896. (Apparently editorial.)

Chapter IX

Wesley on What Holiness Is

WE have already shown that the terms "inbred sin," "inward sin," etc., as used by Wesley, furnish no support to that theory of holiness which makes it to consist in a work of destruction or extermination in the human sensibility. For proof of this statement we refer the reader to Chapters III and VII of this book. We now propose to show that the view here advanced, which defines entire sanctification as a state of entire and constant consecration to God, is in full accord with Wesleyan teaching.

1. *It agrees entirely with what Wesley relates as to the way in which he was led to accept the doctrine of Christian Perfection.*

In relating the steps by which he was led to embrace this doctrine, Wesley states that as early as 1725, in reading "Rules and Exercises of Holy Living and Dying," he was "exceedingly affected" by that part of the book which "relates to purity of intention." "Instantly," he says, "I resolved to dedicate all my life to God,

all my thoughts, and words, and actions; being thoroughly convinced there was no medium, but that every part of my life (not some only) must either be a sacrifice to God or myself; that is, in effect, to the devil.”¹ *Purity of intention*, then, was the subject which first awakened the thought of Wesley to the nature and importance of Christian holiness. What he understood this to mean is seen in what he did—determined to devote his whole life to God.

A year or two later he read Kempis and Law, and he says: “These convinced me more than ever of the absolute impossibility of being half a Christian; and I determined, through His grace, to be all devoted to God, to give him all my soul, my body, and my substance.”² In this second step he is only convinced more than ever of the necessity of that holiness which consists in consecration of his all to God. The impossibility of being half a Christian and the duty of being wholly given up to God were the truths which fixed in Wesley’s mind the idea of Christian holiness at the first. It is plain, then, what his idea of holiness was at that time.

¹ Works, VI, pp. 483, 484. ² Ibid. p. 484.

2. *This same view of Christian holiness appears repeatedly in his subsequent writings.*

In 1733, Wesley preached his sermon on "The Circumcision of the Heart." In 1765 he said of this sermon that it "contains all that I now teach concerning salvation from all sin and loving God with an undivided heart."³ By reference to this sermon it will be seen that there is not a word in it which teaches that holiness is either the destruction or removal of "inbred sin." Nothing is said in reference to the instantaneousness of the work, and no two classes of believers, distinguished by the existence or the removal of inbred sin, is either described or recognized. The holiness there described is declared to be the "distinguishing mark of a true follower of Christ, of one who is in a *state* of acceptance with God."⁴ Such "yield themselves entirely unto God," they are so strengthened of God that they are "no longer constrained to obey sin in the desires thereof;" they "have a pure intention of heart, a steadfast regard to his glory in all their actions;" they "pursue nothing but in relation to him and in subordination to his

³ Works, IV, p. 203. ⁴ Ibid. I, p. 147.

pleasure.”⁵ Every item in this description of a holy Christian resolves itself into just this: a state of entire consecration and abiding salvation from committing sin. For thirty years and more this must have been Wesley’s idea of Christian holiness. Let it be noted, also, that this indorsement of the sermon on “The Circumcision of the Heart” as containing all that he had taught upon the subject of Christian perfection for thirty-two years, was written a little more than two years later than the sermon on “Sin in Believers.”⁶ This fact shows what Wesley understood himself to be teaching in that much misunderstood discourse—rather what he did not intend to teach.

During the same year (1765) he writes concerning “A Collection of Forms of Prayer,” which he had previously prepared for his pupils: “In this I spoke explicitly of giving the whole heart and the whole life to God; this was then, as it is now, my idea of perfection.”⁷ This, too, was written during that wave of special interest upon the subject of sanctification which swept over the Methodist societies from 1760

⁵ Works, I, pp. 148, 149. ⁶ Ibid. IV, pp. 147, 203.

⁷ Ibid. pp. 203, 204.

to 1766. It shows plainly that throughout that period, which a writer is pleased to term "a great revival of holiness"⁸ in the Methodist societies, Wesley taught that Christian holiness was a state of entire consecration to God.

Still later, in his last revision of his "Plain Account," in 1777, he sums up the whole matter by saying: "Look at it again, survey it on every side, and that with the closest attention. In one view it is purity of intention dedicating all the life to God. It is giving God all the heart; it is one desire and design ruling all our tempers. It is the devoting, not a part, but all our soul, body, and substance to God."⁹ In the same connection he presents other definitions, but insists that they mean nothing different from those here given. He says, "Now, take it in which of these views you please (for there is no material difference), and this is the whole and sole perfection, as a train of writings prove to a demonstration, which I have believed and taught for these forty years."¹⁰

An estimable Christian minister who maintains the "inbred-sin" destruction theory, says:

⁸ Perfect Love, p. 150.

⁹ Ibid. VI, p. 530.

¹⁰ Works, VI, 530.

“Mr. Wesley’s mind underwent some changes concerning Christian perfection during his early ministry. He had occasion to modify some expressions and change his opinions somewhat several times before he became fully established in the doctrine. There was a great revival of holiness about 1760, and we have no reason to believe that his views changed at all after that time.”¹¹ We see, however, that whatever may have been his modifications of expression or changes of opinion upon this subject, he did not change his views as to *what Christian holiness is*. He indorsed the same view in 1765 and 1777 which he embraced in 1725. And if, as the writer last quoted states, there is no reason to believe that his views changed at all after 1760, then Wesley taught through all his ministry that Christian holiness is purity of intention, giving all the heart and life to God—a state of entire consecration to God. It was his judgment that his writings proved this “to a demonstration.”

Further, in 1785, Wesley published his last sermon and “most matured views”¹² on the subject of Christian perfection. In this sermon

¹¹ Perfect Love, p. 150.

¹² Tyerman’s Life of Wesley, III, 470.

there is not a word in reference to any destruction of "inbred sin," though he announces his purpose, first of all, to "show what perfection is."¹³ The sin from which a perfect Christian is said to be saved is twice defined as "*a voluntary transgression of a known law*," this definition being placed in italics by himself. He gives several definitions of perfection, none of which are new, and the first of which is "the complying with that kind command, 'My son, give me thy heart!'"¹⁴ He answers an objection that men can not be saved from all sin by insisting that they can be so saved "according to that definition of sin which I apprehend to be the Scriptural definition of it, *a voluntary transgression of a known law*."¹⁵ He further says:

"We can not show this sanctification in a more excellent way than by complying with the exhortation of the apostle: 'I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies [yourselves, your souls and bodies, a part put for the whole by a common figure of speech] a living sacrifice unto God, to whom ye were consecrated many years ago in

¹³ Works, II, p. 168. ¹⁴ Ibid. p. 169. ¹⁵ Ibid, p. 172.

baptism. When what was then devoted is actually presented to God, then is the man of God perfect.”¹⁶

Thus, from the time Wesley was twenty-two years of age to within six years of his death, he maintained that sin should be defined as a voluntary transgression of a known law, and that holiness consists in a state of entire consecration to God. The apparent self-contradictions which have been noted in some parts of his writings upon these subjects are not because of a change in his views, but the result of a fundamental error in his psychological system, which he adopted from Edwards or accepted from the current thought of his time.

3. *The definitions which Wesley incidentally gives of Christian perfection indicate the same idea of this state.*

When he attempts a formal definition, he usually gives more than one, declaring that they all have the same meaning, and leaving his readers to take their choice. “Loving God with all the heart,” “Having the mind that was in Christ,” are among those most frequently re-

¹⁶ Works, II, p. 170.

peated. We have already shown that loving God with all the heart and having the mind that was in Christ are voluntary, and not passive, states of mind. With Wesley they meant just the same as "giving God all the heart," "purity of intention," "one desire and design ruling all our tempers." He uses these two classes of definitions interchangeably as of the same essential meaning, and when using them both, often connects them by the phrase, "in other words," clearly showing that, whatever form of words he used, he was defining what he understood to be a state of voluntary consecration to God.

He calls entire sanctification "more power over all sin."¹⁷ He alludes to it as "the uninterrupted act of faith."¹⁸ He says it is that deep communion with the Father and the Son, whereby they are enabled to give him their whole heart."¹⁹ Later (1769) he wrote, "By Christian perfection I mean: (1) Loving God with all the heart. (2) A heart and life all devoted to God."²⁰ In his description of one who is Scripturally perfect, he repeatedly says: "One

¹⁷ Works, VI, p. 640.

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 166.

¹⁹ Ibid. IV, p. 290.

²⁰ Ibid. IV, p. 309.

in whom is no occasion of stumbling, and who accordingly doth not commit sin.”²¹ “What, then, is religion?” he asks, and answers the question by saying: “It is happiness in God or in the knowledge and love of God. It is faith, working by love, producing righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. *In other words*, it is a heart and life devoted to God.”²² He defines a perfect Christian as one who “hath a single eye.”²³ Speaking of himself and his brother Charles, he says: “Our first conception of it was, it is to have the mind which was in Christ, and to walk as he walked; to have all the mind that was in him, and always to walk as he walked; *in other words*, to be inwardly and outwardly devoted to God, all devoted in heart and life. And we have the same conception of it now (1777), without either addition or diminution.”²⁴

In his “Thoughts upon Jacob Behmen” he says: “We knew before that the whole of religion is a heart and life totally devoted to God. Has he told us, or can he tell us anything more? No; nor all the angels in heaven.”²⁵ “Perfec-

²¹ Works, IV, pp. 257, 342; VII, 598.

²² Ibid. VII, p. 223. ²³ Ibid. VI, p. 487.

²⁴ Ibid. VI, p. 495. The italics are our own.

²⁵ Ibid. V, p. 701.

tion," he declares, "does not consist in any outward state whatever, but in an absolute devotion of all our heart and all our life to God." ²⁶ When defending his own views upon this subject, he writes: "The perfection I teach is perfect love, loving God with all the heart, receiving Christ as prophet, priest, and king to reign alone over all our thoughts, words, and actions." ²⁷ He remarks, concerning a society in which some members professed to have attained this grace: "Concerning several of them, there is all reasonable proof that they have given God all their heart." ²⁸ To one he wrote: "Is your eye altogether single? Is your heart entirely pure? I know you gave up the whole to God once; but do you stand to the gift? Once your will was swallowed up in God's. But is it so now, and will it be so always?" ²⁹ In maintaining the attainability of entire sanctification in this life, he argues thus: "To say Christ will not reign alone in our hearts in this life will not enable us to give him all our hearts; this, in my judgment, is making him a half Savior." ³⁰ Again, "This (joy), therefore, is not the essence of relig-

²⁶ Works, VI, p. 543.

²⁷ Ibid. VI, p. 740.

²⁸ Ibid. IV, p. 211.

²⁹ Ibid. VI, p. 728.

³⁰ Ibid. VI, p. 740.

ion, which is no other than humble, gentle, patient love. I do not know whether all these are not included in that one word, resignation. For the highest lesson our Lord (as man) learned on earth was to say, 'Not as I will, but as thou wilt.' " ³¹

Some objected to his doctrine of perfection that the most prominent saints mentioned in the Old Testament committed sin. He defends his views by saying that "We can not infer from hence that all Christians do and must commit sin as long as they live." ³² Others objected that Paul and Barnabas sinned in their disagreement in reference to John Mark. Wesley answers that if they did, that does not prove that "all other Christians, in all ages, do and must commit sin as long as they live." ³³ The doctrine attacked was Wesley's teaching on Christian perfection; the doctrine defended was that Christians could be saved from committing sin. He says of those who are "sanctified throughout," that they "continually presented their souls and bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, in consequence of which they re-

³¹ Works, VII, p. 222.

³² Ibid. VI, p. 489.

³³ Ibid.

joiced evermore, prayed without ceasing, and in everything gave thanks. And this, and no other, is what we believe to be true Scriptural sanctification.”³⁴ The holiness of angels he describes as consisting in the fact that “they are altogether devoted to God’s will and perfectly obedient in all things.”³⁵ He speaks of sanctified believers as “adult Christians,” those “who offend not.”³⁶

In the preface to his “*Life of Halyburton*” he writes: “What do you mean by the word sin? Do you mean those numberless weaknesses and follies, sometimes improperly termed sins of infirmity? If so, we shall not put off these but with our bodies. But if you mean it (the gospel) does not promise entire freedom from sin in its proper sense or from committing it, this is by no means true, unless the Scripture be false.”³⁷ To one of his correspondents he wrote: “Why should you be without the blessing any longer? It is His will that from the time you read this you should never sin against Him any more.”³⁸

“Always remember,” he says in 1771, “the

³⁴ Works, II, p. 247. ³⁵ Ibid. I, p. 239.

³⁶ Ibid. I, p. 106.

³⁷ Ibid. I, p. 364.

³⁸ Tyerman’s *Life of Wesley*, I, p. 288. Ibid. II, p. 418.

essence of Christian holiness is simplicity and purity, one design, one desire, entire devotion to God.”³⁹ Again, he says: “Do not imagine, as we are continually prone to do, that it lies in an indivisible point. You experienced a taste of it when you were justified; you since experienced the thing itself, only in a low degree; and God gave you his Spirit that you might know the things which are freely given you. Hold fast the beginning of your confidence steadfast unto the end.”⁴⁰

These quotations are taken from a large number of the same essential import, which are found in Wesley’s writings. Their bearing upon the subject in discussion is apparent. They represent Christian holiness as a constant giving of the whole heart and life to God, an abiding state of entire consecration, a state of salvation from committing sin. Wesley thought it strange that some persons who accepted the doctrine that perfect love is attainable in this life, still started back at the thought that Christians can live without committing sin. He attributes this to a mistaken notion of sin. Christ

³⁹ Works, VI, p. 774.⁴⁰ Ibid. VI, p. 718.

reigning in the heart is what he calls "full salvation." His several forms of definition were only different words by which he expressed the same essential view. To define Christian holiness, therefore, as a state of entire consecration to God, is but to state, "in other words," the Wesleyan doctrine, that it is "to be inwardly and outwardly devoted to God, all devoted in heart and life."

4. *Christian perfection, as taught by Wesley, was understood at the time to consist in a voluntary state or salvation from committing sin.*

It will not be denied that the ablest expounder and defender of Wesleyan teaching among the early Methodists was Fletcher of Madeley. What, then, did he understand Wesley to teach upon this subject? At a time when the discussion of this subject was rife in the Methodist societies, when Whitefield denounced what he called "the doctrine of sinless perfection," declaring that those who held it, "if Christians at all, were in a very legal state,"⁴¹ and Charles Wesley had come to doubt the testimony of all who professed its attainment,

⁴¹ Tyerman's *Life of Wesley*, I, pp. 346, 347.

Fletcher wrote to Wesley, proposing to publish something upon the subject. He says, "I think we must define exactly what we mean by the perfection which is attainable here."⁴² Then, after expressing the view that "the understanding, the memory, the passionate affections, can not be perfected here," he adds: "The one power, then, that I see can be perfected here, because it is altogether independent of the body, is *the will* and, of course, the *affections*, so far as they work on the will."⁴³ Wesley replied: "What I mean by perfection I have defined, both in the first and in the further thoughts upon that subject—pure love, rejoicing evermore, praying always, and in everything giving thanks. And I incline to think the account you give will amount to the very same thing."⁴⁴ If, then, Fletcher understood Wesley, and Wesley understood Fletcher, the perfection taught by Wesley, however expressed, consisted in a state of the will. It was *the very same thing* which Fletcher had expressed as a sanctified state of the will.

The following passages from the "Last Check

⁴² Wesley's Works, VI, 668.

⁴³ Tyerman's Life of Wesley, II, p. 563.

⁴⁴ Ibid. II, p. 564.

to Antinomianism" clearly indicate the doctrine of perfection which Fletcher himself taught, and also his understanding of Wesley's teaching upon the same subject.

"We believe that, although adult, established believers, or perfect Christians, may admit of many involuntary mistakes, errors, and faults, and of many involuntary improprieties of speech and behavior, yet so long as their will is bent upon doing God's will, so long as they walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, so long as they fulfill the law of liberty by pure love, they do not *sin* according to the gospel, because (evangelically speaking) sin is the transgression, and love is the fulfilling of that law. Far, then, from thinking that there is the least absurdity in saying daily, 'Vouchsafe to keep me this day without sin,' we doubt not but in the believers who walk in the light as Christ is in the light, that deep petition is answered; the righteousness of the law which they are under is fulfilled; and, of consequence, an evangelically *sinless* perfection is daily experienced."⁴⁵

"There is a twofold perfection, the perfection

⁴⁵ Fletcher's Works, II, p. 495.

of the work and that of the workman. The perfection of the work is when the work does so exactly and strictly answer the holy law of God that there is no irregularity in it. The perfection of the workman is nothing but inward sincerity and uprightness of heart towards God, which may be where there are many imperfections and defects intermingled.”⁴⁶

“Adamic perfection extended to the whole man; his body was perfectly sound in all its parts, and his soul in all its powers. But Christian perfection extends chiefly to the will, which is the capital moral power of the soul.”⁴⁷

“If I am not mistaken, it evidently follows from these plain words of Christ, (1) That he taught a personal perfection and an evangelically sinless perfection, too. (2) That this perfection consists in not breaking, by willful commission, the least of the commandments. . . . (3) That the perfection which Christ enforced upon his disciples was not merely of the negative kind, but of the positive also, since it consisted in both doing and teaching the least as well as the greatest of God’s commandments.”⁴⁸

⁴⁶ *Fetcher’s Works*, II, p. 496.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* p. 499. ⁴⁸ *Ibid.* p. 596.

“From these Scriptures it appears that under every dispensation the perfect, or they who keep the commandments, have unspeakable advantages.” ⁴⁹

“Why, then, should the world be driven from sincere, by the fear of perfect, obedience, especially as our Lord never required absolute perfection from archangels, much less from fallen man? The perfection which he kindly calls us to, being nothing but a faithful improvement of our talents according to the proportion of grace given us and the standard of the dispensation we are under.” ⁵⁰

“And to undo the harm you have done or remove the offense you have given by your letters, you show yourself reconciled to St. James’s pure religion; you openly give Mr. Wesley the right hand of fellowship, and gladly help him to provoke believers to uninterrupted love and good works; that is, to Christian perfection.” ⁵¹

Upon these quotations we remark: (1) That they teach that involuntary states are not sin. (2) That perfect Christians are the “adult, established believers.” (3) That to be kept from

⁴⁹ Fletcher’s Works, II, p. 620.

⁵⁰ Ibid. I, pp. 381, 382. ⁵¹ Ibid. p. 272.

committing known sin is to realize the experience of Christian perfection. (4) That Christian perfection is "inward sincerity and uprightness of heart toward God." (5) That it "extends chiefly to the will." (6) That it consists in not breaking by willful commission the known commandments of God; in other words, in obeying his known will. (7) That it is uninterrupted love and good works. (8) These passages are included in Fletcher's defense of Wesley's teachings upon the subject of Christian perfection. Wesley never accused him of having misunderstood him. There is not a shadow of evidence that he did misunderstand Wesley. And yet he defends Wesley's doctrine of perfection by showing that under the provisions of the gospel men may be saved uninterruptedly from committing sin. (9) The opponents of Wesley attacked his doctrine of perfection on the ground that Christians could not be saved in this life from committing sin. Fletcher defended the doctrine on the ground that Christians could be saved from committing known sin. Both alike appear to have understood what Wesley taught. (10) Fletcher evidently understood that all moral quality resides in voluntary states. He speaks of "inward

sin," "indwelling sin," as that which we are to repent of and "forsake."⁵² That conception does not harmonize with the notion of "inbred sin destruction." He says that "God's goodness consists in the perfect rectitude of his eternal will, and not in a want of power to do an act of injustice. And that the devil's wickedness consists in the complete perverseness of his obstinate will, and not in a complete want of power to do what is right."⁵³ He evidently regards holiness in God and in man as essentially the same *in nature*, sin in man and in Satan as *one in kind*, and all as consisting in voluntary states. He thus understands himself to be defending Wesleyan theology as against ultra Calvinism. (II) It is a significant fact that to this day the doctrine of entire sanctification attainable in this life is often attacked and sometimes defended over the same question—the possibility of living without committing sin. If, as some maintain, regeneration is a state of uninterrupted obedience to God—salvation from the commission of known sin—then the possibility of being saved from committing voluntary sin is not a

⁵² Fletcher's Works, II, p. 642.

⁵³ Ibid. pp. 197, 198.

question of sanctification at all, but the question of the attainability of a regenerate state. And yet we venture to say that no Methodist writer has ever taken that position. (12) In alluding to the terms which Wesley employs to denote a state of Christian holiness, Fletcher says: "This he sometimes calls *full sanctification*, the state of fathers in Christ, or the glorious liberty of the children of God; sometimes a being strengthened, established, and settled; or being rooted and grounded in love; but most commonly he calls it Christian perfection."⁵⁴ And Fletcher defends as Wesleyan a doctrine of entire sanctification which is expressed by a list of terms, every one of which means just this, a state of entire and continued consecration to God.

5. *Wesley often defined regeneration and entire sanctification in the same language, and quoted the same Scripture passages in proof and illustration of both.*

Very frequently he mentions pride, anger, and self-will as specifying what he means by "inbred sin." But he also says that the new birth expels "the love of the world, the love of

⁵⁴ Fletcher's Works, I, p. 14.

pleasure, of ease, of honor, of money, together with pride, anger, self-will, and every other evil temper; in a word, changing the earthly, sensual, devilish mind into the mind which was in Christ.”⁵⁵ He affirms of all “Christians,” that they are “holy.” “Created anew in Christ Jesus,”⁵⁶ “renewed in the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness,”⁵⁷ are Scripture phrases which he indiscriminately applies to all who have been born again. “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord,” he quotes in proof of the necessity of the “new birth.”⁵⁸ Those whose sins are forgiven receive in that moment a “lot among them that are sanctified;”⁵⁹ “they are freed from sin as well as guilt.”⁶⁰ “As soon as his pardon or justification is witnessed to him by the Holy Ghost, he is saved. He loves God and all mankind. He has the mind that was in Christ and power to walk as he walked.”⁶¹ In a “Conference,” at which John and Charles Wesley were present, this subject was considered at length, the conclusion being that “every man, as soon as he believes, is a new creature, sanc-

⁵⁵ Wesley's Works, I, p. 385. ⁵⁶ Ibid. I, p. 332.

⁵⁷ Ibid. I, p. 403. ⁵⁸ Ibid. I, p. 404.

⁵⁹ Ibid. I, p. 241 ⁶⁰ Ibid. V, p. 35.

⁶¹ Ibid. V, p. 205.

tified, pure in heart.”⁶² Wesley says that “the being born again does really signify the being inwardly changed by the Almighty operation of the Spirit of God; changed from sin to holiness, renewed in the image of Him that created us.”⁶³ He maintains that until we offer our souls and bodies living sacrifices unto God, we are not Christians. He quotes Romans vi, 18: “Being made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness,”—to prove that, “If we are not free from sin, we are not Christians.”⁶⁴ “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you,” was with Wesley a favorite text in proof of the attainability of entire sanctification, and he applies it just as readily in support of the doctrine of the new birth.⁶⁵ “The circumcision of the heart,” “loving God with all the heart,” “having the mind which was in Christ,” “rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in everything giving thanks,” are phrases which he habitually uses in defining the perfection which he

⁶² Wesley's Works, V, p. 572. ⁶³ Ibid. V, p. 428.

⁶⁴ Wesley's Works, VI, p. III.

⁶⁵ Ibid. V, p. 634; VI, 497.

preached, and he employs them again and again in describing the new birth.

In thus using these terms and proof texts, Wesley is evidently conscious of no inconsistency or self-contradiction. Had he understood regeneration to be a state in which "inbred sin" is weakened only, and entire sanctification to be the work of its removal or destruction in the sense in which that is now frequently taught, he could not have applied these passages and phrases indiscriminately to both states without palpable inconsistency. Those who teach the inbred-sin-destruction theory do not apply these texts and terms in this way. Their proof texts are specific; and it is insisted that they are not applicable to a "merely regenerate" state. Their definitions constitute a somewhat fixed terminology, distinguishing mainly that idea of holiness which makes it to consist in the destruction of an "inbeing of sin."

If, on the other hand, Wesley taught that every regenerated soul is, *for the time being*, entirely consecrated, sanctified, holy, and that entire sanctification differs from this state only in the fact of continuousness, his use of these texts and terms was perfectly legitimate.

Chapter X

Objections Examined

WE now proceed to examine some objections which have been offered to the views of Christian holiness presented in preceding pages.

1. It is said that the Scriptures command Christian believers to be holy; that they are exhorted to go on to perfection; that they are promised entire sanctification, and that Jesus and the apostles prayed for the sanctification of the people of God.

All this is readily admitted, and these facts should serve to impress every Christian with the solemn necessity and exalted privilege of personal holiness through the riches of grace in Christ. But none of these facts are at all in point in this discussion. Those passages which command holiness, those which exhort to sanctification, and those in which it is promised, do not tell us that this holiness consists in the destruction or removal of "inbred sin." Scripture passages may command and promise holiness, and neither command nor promise that holiness

which is implied in this particular definition. There are many passages which command and promise holiness, considered as the opposite of sin; that is, the opposite of "voluntary transgression of known law,"—salvation from committing sin. To make them promise or command a holiness which consists in the destruction of the effects of ancestral sin, is to read into them a theory for which those passages are not responsible.

2. It is said that there were Christians at Corinth who were nevertheless "carnal," and it is claimed that this carnality consisted in the fact that their "inbred sin" had not been removed or destroyed. It is assumed that Paul is describing those who are in a regenerate state, and, hence, partly holy and partly carnal.

We answer: (1) Paul does not say that the persons of whom he is speaking were partly carnal and partly holy. He says they were *carnal*. The notion that this carnality consisted in the existence of "inbred sin" in them, underlying, but not controlling, their voluntary activities, is without a shadow of proof. The apostle shows what he means when he says, "They walked as men;" that is, like unregenerate men.

There was among them "envying and strife."¹ And are these specimens of "inbred sin," controlled, but not destroyed? It was commonly reported that there was "fornication" among them.² Was this "inbred sin?" From these schismatic bickerings and shameful acts, common to their old heathen life, Paul beseeches them to *cleanse themselves*. The Church at Corinth, like Churches now, was in a mixed condition. There were some members whose religion consisted in an admiration for particular preachers. They formed sets and cliques, creating divisions, and some lived in what, from a Christian point of view, was gross sin. This was what Paul meant by carnality in the Church at Corinth. (2) Dr. Adam Clarke rightly interprets this passage, when he says: "*But as unto carnal,—persons under the influence of fleshly appetites, coveting and living for the things of this life.*"

(Vers. 3.) "In this state, well might the apostle say, *Are ye not carnal, and walk as men? Ye act just as the people of the world, and have no more of the spirit of religion than they.*"

(Vers. 4.) "Led by their senses and mere out-

¹ 1 Corinthians iii, 1-4; v, 1. ² 2 Corinthians vii, 1.

ward appearances, without being under the guidance of either reason or grace. There are thousands of such people in the Christian Church to the present day.”³

Again, in his notes on the seventh chapter of Romans, he says: “From all this it follows that the epithet *carnal*, which is the characteristic designation of an unregenerate man, can not be applied to St. Paul after his conversion, nor, indeed, to any Christian in that state.” “To be in the flesh, or to be *carnally-minded*, solely respects the unregenerate.”⁴

The Church, as a whole, was made up of “babes in Christ,” for the gospel had been first introduced at Corinth but five years previous to the writing of this epistle; and “among them” were persons still in a carnal state, living in sin, and knowing nothing of the saving power of Christ.

3. It is claimed by some that, in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, Paul describes the experience of a regenerated soul, and that this description shows that this soul, though regenerate, possessed “inbred sin,” and

³ Commentary on 1 Corinthians iii, 1-4.

⁴ Commentary on Romans vii.

was awakened to the necessity of its removal. On this interpretation of the chapter named, we remark: (1) Methodist commentators, so far as we are informed, do not understand this chapter to describe the experience of a Christian, and many Calvinistic writers agree with them in maintaining that it is descriptive of an awakened but unsaved sinner. (2) It describes a state in which the law of God is apprehended and intellectually approved, but neither loved nor obeyed. This is not the condition of a regenerated soul. (3) The spiritual state described in this chapter is that of one who is "carnal, sold under sin."⁵ It would be difficult to frame a sentence which would more vividly picture a state of abject bondage to sin. (4) If the "sin that dwelleth in me,"⁶ and the "law in my members,"⁷ have reference to "inbred sin," it certainly was neither "weakened," nor "controlled," in this case, for it brought him "into captivity to the law of sin." The word *law*, here used, shows that the writer is describing habitual bondage to sin. This is not regeneration. (5) The character here described is represented

⁵ Romans vii, 14.

⁶ Ibid. verse 17.

⁷ Ibid. verse 23.

as "wretched," and bound to a body of death. Is this the New Testament picture of a soul, forgiven and born from above? (6) In the eighth chapter it is said that "to be carnally-minded is death."⁸ Does *carnal* mean spiritual death in the eighth chapter, but spiritual life in the seventh? (7) Paul is showing that, while no sinner can be saved through the law, any repentant sinner can be saved through the gospel. But, if the seventh chapter of Romans gives his idea of Christian experience, he has shown that the gospel is in no way superior to the law as a way of salvation. Both alike leave souls bond-slaves to sin. Thanks be to God, this is not true! The seventh chapter of Romans does not describe Christian experience, and it furnishes no support to the doctrine of holiness which makes it to consist in the destruction or removal of "inbred sin."

4. The passage in our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,"⁹ is often quoted as teaching the doctrine of Christian perfection, to which exceptions are here taken.

⁸ Romans viii, 6. ⁹ Matthew v, 48.

That this text enjoins Christian perfection is readily admitted; but that it in any way intimates that this perfection consists, in whole or in part, in a removal or destruction of "inbred sin," is not admitted. The note of Wesley upon this verse is manifestly pertinent: "*Therefore ye shall be perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect.*" So the original runs, referring to all that holiness which is described in the foregoing verses."¹⁰ But there is nothing in the foregoing verses in reference to the extermination of an "inbeing of sin," as either constituting, or included in, the holiness required. The holiness enjoined in this marvelous sermon is wholly that of voluntary states of mind. It is bearing and doing in unswerving devotion to God. In praying, in almsgiving, in fasting, and in managing earthly treasures, all is to be done with reference to the will of God. So of the sin forbidden. Even the "lust," of which Jesus speaks, is no "inbred sin;" it is *committing adultery in the heart*,¹¹ wicked consent of the will. It describes a state of mind which only lacked opportunity to commit the outward sin.

¹⁰ Notes on New Testament, p. 24. ¹¹ Matthew v, 28.

It is often assumed that, when our Lord speaks of "the pure in heart,"¹² he means those in whom the "inbeing of sin" has been destroyed. "Heart-purity" is a term supposed to be technically descriptive of that state realized only in the removal or destruction of "inbred sin." This "blessing of heart-purity" in the cases of the immediate disciples of Christ, it is claimed, was received on the day of Pentecost, some ten days after our Lord's ascension. But it should be remembered that, making an exception of Judas, Jesus twice pronounced his disciples *pure* previous to his crucifixion, using the same word as when he said, "Blessed are the pure in heart."¹³ "Purity of intention" is, in this sermon, purity of heart. The sins here pointed out are but different forms of voluntary self-seeking; and the holiness enjoined is that of singleness of purpose—"a single eye"—uninterrupted choice of the will of God. "What the eye is to the body, the intention is to the soul. . . . *If thine eye be single*—singly fixed on God and heaven—thy whole soul will be full of holiness and happiness."¹⁴ A single eye,

¹² Matthew v, 8. ¹³ John xiii, 10; xv, 3.

¹⁴ Wesley's Notes on Matthew vi, 22.

then, is purity of intention, and that is a soul "full of holiness."

5. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."¹⁵ No one passage is more frequently quoted as expressing what is meant by a state of entire sanctification than this. Wesley says concerning it, "Nor did I ever say or mean any more by perfection than thus loving and serving God."¹⁶ But there is nothing in this text, either in the Old Testament or its quotation in the New, in reference to the destruction or extirpation of the effects of ancestral sin. The command requires voluntary devotion of the whole being to God. Love to God is not "an emotion of admiration." It is not an emotion at all, though it may be, and often is, accompanied by deep emotion. We have already shown that the love to God, which constitutes holiness, is a state of voluntary consecration to him. It is, in kind, like love in God. Directed towards man, it is a consecration to his well-being. God loves man, not in "emotions of admiration," but in ceaselessly willing his high-

. ¹⁵ Deuteronomy vi, 5; Matthew xxii, 37.

¹⁶ Wesley's Works, VI, 535.

est good. To love God and man, as required in this passage, is uninterruptedly to choose the will and honor of God, and the greatest good of man. Jesus loved perfectly. He "pleased not himself."¹⁷ He sought not his own will, but the will of Him that sent him.¹⁸ He gave himself all and always for the welfare of man, according to the will of God. This was holiness in him; it is holiness in his followers.

6. "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification,"¹⁹ is often quoted as if it proved technically that sanctification consists in the destruction of a "sin-principle" in the heart. But what is there in this passage to indicate this theory? Paul plainly shows what prompted this exhortation, when he adds, "That ye should abstain from fornication." Some of the professed Christians at Thessalonica were continuing their old pagan ways of living; and the apostle tells them that God calls them to sanctified life, and they must come under the laws of Christian purity. "God's will about us—that is, his sanctification of us, claiming our devotion—involves our abstinence from whatever we know to be

¹⁷ Romans xv, 3. ¹⁸ John v, 30.

¹⁹ 1 Thessalonians iv, 3.

opposed to him. And, in giving us the gospel call (v. 7), God was sanctifying us to himself.”²⁰

7. In the promise of the “new covenant” which God would make with the house of Israel, it is stated that it would not be like the one made at Sinai, but that God would put his laws into the minds of his people, writing them in their hearts, and remembering their sins no more.²¹ This promise to put God’s laws into the mind, and write them upon the heart, is understood by some to be a specific promise of the destruction of “inbred sin.” Upon this subject we remark: (1) That the whole passage presents the superiority of the gospel dispensation over that which went before it. The difference is declared to be like that between having the law of God revealed externally on tables of stone, and having it written upon the heart. The law written upon the heart indicates that, under the gospel privilege, the people of God would realize in themselves the import and requirements of the law; that is, *full and constant obedience*. (2) The only reason assigned for making the new covenant, is that the house of Israel kept breaking

²⁰ Holiness as Understood by the Writers of the Bible, p. 50. ²¹ Jeremiah xxxi, 31-34; Hebrews viii, 8-12.

the old one: "They continued not in my covenant." They did not realize a state of continued obedience to God. The language indicates that, in the higher privileges of the new covenant, Christians will continue in the covenant; that is, will attain a state of abiding consecration to God. (3) That this is the meaning of the passage is further suggested by the declaration, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." As if, the people having ceased to disobey, their former sins did not come into mind. As proving that, through the greater privileges of the gospel, believers may enter into a state of entire and continuous obedience to God, this passage is certainly in point. If quoted as a promise that in sanctification there shall be an extermination of the effects of Adamic sin, it has no pertinency, and little, if any, meaning. (4) This passage suggests a word of caution to those teachers of our time who think themselves able to point out when and where Abraham and Jacob and Isaiah received "the blessing of holiness," subsequent to their justification. To attempt to gather instances of entire sanctification from Old Testament characters is difficult enough; but to present them as illustrations of

the experience of holiness, defined as the removal or destruction of "inbred sin," is exegesis, born of dogmatic necessity. Wesley was both a scholar and a Christian, yet he regarded it as doubtful if any of the Old Testament saints attained to a state in which they did not commit sin.²² He thought it quite possible that, when Solomon said, "There is no man that sinneth not," the statement was true, and that the same fact was true to the time of Christ. But he still maintained the doctrine of Christian perfection, by saying, "The only conclusion which I deny is, that all Christians do and will commit sin as long as they live."²³

8. It has been objected to the view of Christian holiness here maintained, that St. John affirms of all who are born of God, that they do not commit sin, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin;"²⁴ that to define entire sanctification as a state in which sin is not committed, is to place it no higher than the New Testament places the new birth. To this objection we reply: (1) The verse quoted, not only states that those who are born of God *do not*

²² Wesley's Works, VI, p. 489.

²³ Ibid. VI, pp. 536, 537. ²⁴ 1 John iii, 9.

commit sin, it as explicitly declares that they *can not* sin. How are we to understand this? Does the apostle mean to assert that, from the moment of regeneration, sin is an absolute impossibility to all who are born of God? No one but a downright Antinomian would claim this as the meaning of the passage. John did not teach that regenerate souls were more immaculate than Adam and the angels. If he did mean that sin is an impossibility to all Christians in this sense, then he must also have meant that it is no virtue in them not to sin; for there is no moral character in not doing what we can not do. If Christians can not sin, their obedience to God is unavoidable. But a necessitated obedience is no obedience at all. An impossibility of sinning would be equally an impossibility of being holy. It is plain, therefore, that, in this passage, St. John was not asserting that those who are born of God *never do or can thereafter commit sin*. The objection, then, is not well taken. (2) The apostle plainly implies that young Christians may, and do, commit more or less sin. He says, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the right-

eous; and he is the propitiation for our sins.” ²⁵ He was writing to “little children,” young Christians. He assumes that they will sometimes sin; and, lest they should cast away their confidence, he points them to One who is the propitiation for our sins and an advocate with the Father. Strange, indeed, would this language have been had he understood that, from the moment of regeneration, they neither would nor could commit sin. He knew it to be their privilege to attain a state in which they would not sin; and he writes to them in order that they “may not sin.” (R. V.) But he is far enough from teaching that the new birth is a state, from the first moment of which believers are wholly saved from committing sin. (3) John states in the next chapter, that “Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not.” ²⁶ This shows that the apostle regarded the state of believers, in which they do not commit sin, as marked by the feature of *permanency*. He does not affirm this abiding in Christ of every believer from the moment of the new birth, but of those whose consecration

²⁵ I John ii, 1, 2.

²⁶ I John iii, 6.

and faith are not interrupted by known sin; of the "young men who are strong, and have overcome the wicked one," and still more of the "fathers," who, in a more profound degree, have "known Him that is from the beginning."²⁷

(4) We submit this question as one of fact, concerning which Christians can testify. Do regenerate souls, in all cases, come at once into a state in which they commit no sin thereafter? Who rises up to declare that, from the moment he was born from above, he has never committed a sin? What Christian has never given way to anger, shame, fear, or any form of sinful self-indulgence? Who, under the eye of the Holy Savior, is prepared to say that, from the hour of his regeneration, his will has never faltered or wavered from a supreme choice of the will of God? And, if there are none to make this claim, then the view of Christian holiness here maintained places it higher than regeneration; and the objection is of no weight. (5) The meaning of the passage under consideration, and of the verse preceding, are well indicated in

²⁷ 1 John ii, 13, 14.

Whedon's Commentary: "*He that committeth sin:* The opposite of *doeth righteousness* in previous verse, and both are in the *continuous present tense*, referring not to single subordinate acts, but to *predominate practice*. . . . A Christian can not practice sin, for as a Christian he retains a regenerate principle, incompatible with sin. He can not practice sin, and stay a Christian."²⁸

(6) Nor is it correct to say that Wesley interpreted this passage to mean that regeneration is a state in which Christians do not commit sin. Wesley does teach that he who is born of God, at that time has power over all sin, and that he need not sin any more. But he does not teach that all who are regenerated are, from that moment, saved from committing sin. He could not consistently teach this, for he confesses to the fact that he himself sinned a few days after his heart was "strangely warmed," and that "immediately God hid his face."²⁹ His own words elsewhere give his views upon the text before us. "I believe even babes in Christ, *while they keep themselves*, do not commit sin.

²⁸ Commentary on 1 John iii, 8, 9.

²⁹ Wesley's Works, III, p. 75.

By sin I mean outward sin, and the word commit I take in its plain literal meaning.”³⁰

Dr. Dodd wrote to Wesley: “You allow in another sermon, in evident contradiction to yourself, that the true children of God could, and did, commit sin.” To this Wesley replies: “This is no contradiction to anything I ever advanced. I everywhere allow that a child of God can, and will, commit sin, if he does not keep himself. . . . The only conclusion which I deny is, that all Christians do and will commit sin as long as they live.”³⁰ Let it be remembered that this was written in reply to the criticism of Dr. Dodd on Wesley’s doctrine of Christian perfection. Wesley’s reply is in substance this, that, though believers may and do commit more or less sin for a time, a state is attainable in which they will cease to commit sin, and abide in constant obedience to God. This he defended as his teaching upon Christian perfection.

9. “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God, your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”³¹

³⁰ Wesley’s Works, VI, pp. 535, 536.

³¹ I Thessalonians v, 23.

This passage is often quoted as technically proving that entire sanctification is the removal of an "inbeing of sin" from a believer. But what is there in this text which indicates such an idea? (1) The sanctification here prayed for, and which the apostle assures the Thessalonian believers is promised to them by the faithfulness of God, is that which they are to expect in this life. (2) It includes the body as well as the soul. There is no intimation that the soul is to be sanctified in one sense, and the body in another, nor that the soul and body are to be sanctified in different degrees. Both are to be wholly sanctified. Now, it will not be maintained that the effects of ancestral sin are wholly removed from the bodies of believers in this life. Their bodies may be wholly sanctified, and yet the effects of Adamic sin, in greater or less degree, remain, and there is no authority given in this passage for the notion that the same may not be true of the soul also. Both alike may be kept in entire and continued consecration to God; and this is entire sanctification. (3) The sense in which believers may expect to be wholly sanctified in this life is clearly given in the statement that they may be "preserved blameless;" that is, they may

be kept from committing sin. This is the doctrine of sanctification, we are happy to believe, and humbly seek to maintain. Adam Clarke paraphrases this passage thus: "May He sanctify you to the end and to the uttermost, that, as sin hath reigned unto death, even so may grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." ³²

10. "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us." ³³ A writer of some prominence understands the sin which doth so easily beset us, to mean "inbred sin." ³⁴ And, of course, he would have us interpret the exhortation here given as an inspired call upon the Hebrew Christians to seek the removal or destruction of their "inbred sin." Upon what authority, or by what rules of interpretation, this passage is so explained, we are unable to see. The writer compares the Christian to one who runs in a race in order to gain a prize. As such a runner threw off whatever might hinder his movements, and kept his eye fixed upon the goal, so the Christian is exhorted to abandon whatever may obstruct or impede him in his

³² Commentary on the passage.

³³ Hebrews xii, 1.

³⁴ A Manual of Holiness, p. 33.

race, looking without interruption to Jesus, the author and finisher of his faith. The sin which doth so easily beset us, is something to be *laid aside*. Does this expression describe the removal or destruction of an "inbeing of sin?" We are somewhat familiar with the writings of those who maintain the theory that "inbred sin" is destroyed in entire sanctification, and we are sure that we have never met an instance in which those writers have exhorted believers to *lay aside* their "inbred sin." Wesley well explains the phrase, "The sin which doth so easily beset us," when he says, "The sin of our constitution, the sin of our education, the sin of our profession." ³⁵

II. It is objected to the view of entire sanctification here maintained, that it is contradicted by the experiences of those who claim to have received this grace. It is said that they know by their experiences that this state consists in the removal or destruction of their "inbred sin." This argument is often put forward as having the weight of positive knowledge. To question this testimony is regarded as proof of a want of spir-

³⁵ Wesley's Notes on Hebrews xii, 1.

itual light, and as venturing between God and the holy privacies of Christian experience in a manner which borders upon sacrilege. Now, while we seek to be reverent and entirely charitable, we deem it eminently proper to examine this argument, so frequently drawn from alleged Christian experience. Upon the objection as just stated, we offer the following remarks: (1) We have no disposition to discredit the reality of the experience related by those who hold the theory of entire sanctification, to which we have offered objections, wherever that experience is evidenced by a holy life. The views here maintained neither require that such experiences be regarded as spurious, nor cast the least degree of suspicion that they are unreal. It is very important, however, clearly to distinguish between what is *experience*, and what are only *inferences from our experiences*. We do not experience doctrines nor philosophical theories. It has been truthfully said, that "Many confound experience and theory, and suppose that whatever one has experienced, he can explain."³⁶ The testimony of experience relates to certain *facts of conscious-*

³⁶ Philosophy of Christian Perfection, p. 8.

ness. From these facts doctrines or theories may be *inferred*. These inferences may be correct, or they may be incorrect. In either case they are not experience; they are only inferences. Consciousness testifies only to existing states and operations of the mind. It affirms nothing concerning their causes or their consequents. We do not doubt that many persons, who accept the "inbred sin-destruction" theory of sanctification, realize precious experiences of full and continued salvation from sin, and so far as these experiences are competent to testify, they are to be believed. But their experiences are one thing, and their theories are quite another. They may infer that their doctrinal views are the necessary basis of their experiences, and that no other views will account for that which they experience. This, however, is their inference, and no part of their experience. Their experiences may be competent to affirm that they are in a state of constant and "supreme preference for God," and that they are conscious of no sin within them; but this in no way proves that their experience in sanctification consists in the destruction or removal of "inbred sin." In an able work, from

which we have already quoted, the writer says: "It is certain, however, that at such a crisis a thorough and mighty victory is achieved; that indwelling sin, if not absolutely cast out, is most effectually bruised under the feet of the incoming Conqueror; and as to all this, Scripture and experience coincide. May it not be added, beyond this both are silent?"³⁷

The same writer quotes approvingly from another, as follows: "Consciousness takes notice of the soul's processes, but the range of its observance does not extend to the quiescent states of the soul. Whether, therefore, the carnal mind be subdued into inaction or utterly extirpated, consciousness can not answer, because the subject is out of range. And, even should some of the motions of sin very softly show themselves in their thick disguises, it is not certain that the power of introspection would infallibly detect them. . . . It is no certain evidence that there is no indwelling sin in the soul, because its motions have not been felt for a given season, short or long."³⁸

While we can not fully agree with the last

³⁷ Christian Purity, p. 98.

³⁸ Quoted in Christian Purity, pp. 98, 99.

quotation in reference to the limitations of consciousness, they both clearly point out the fact that experience is not competent to affirm that entire sanctification consists in a destruction of the effects of Adamic sin. It is not safe to interpret the Scriptures by individual experiences. Experience must be brought to the test of the Bible, not the Bible to the test of experience. It is undoubtedly true that the facts of spiritual life and the teachings of the Scriptures harmonize, but experiences must be tried and interpreted by the Word of God.

(2) It is by no means true that all who claim to live in the experience of entire sanctification understand this state to consist in the destruction or removal of "inbred sin." Much less is it true of all who give evidence of having attained this state of grace. On the contrary, many who regard this theory as erroneous testify to experiences of saving grace as deep and as abiding as others. There are those who regard this "inbred-sin destruction" theory as unscriptural and of misleading tendency, who rejoice in a constant salvation from sin. There is no necessary connection between this particular idea of sanctification and its actual experience, though this

is sometimes practically assumed. To admit the reality of the experience, and all the facts to which it can legitimately testify, is in no way to admit the truth of the theory itself.

(3) The class of believers is not small who, at some time or times during their Christian lives, have thought themselves the subject of such a work of grace as wholly destroyed or took away all their "inbred sin," but who, at other and later periods, have found themselves still possessed of their former tendencies to sin. To some this has been a matter of deep, and even dangerous, perplexity. Holding to the view that entire sanctification is the destruction of "inbred sin," they are forced to the conclusion, either that they were deceived in thinking themselves sanctified, or that, in some way, they have forfeited and "lost the blessing." To entertain the thought that their prayers were not answered as they thought, that what they took to be the witness of the Spirit was the working of their own minds, and that they were led to profess an experience which they did not possess, has tried and shaken them beyond measure. Others, still believing that they did experience a destruction of their "inbred sin,"

are continually in distress over what seems to them inexplicable; that, in some way, they hardly know how, or why, or when, the blessing has departed from them. They live in a kind of Christian's "wailing-place." The fact that they did, at those times of refreshing, enter upon new and higher experiences, should not be denied. That they received spiritual illumination and a revelation of Christ as never before, and that they experienced a holy triumph, in the deep calm of which their souls, for a time, were unruffled by any antagonistic movement from within themselves, were doubtless all facts. That they knew, and still know. But they did not know that this spiritual uplift was the destruction of all inclination to sin. That was their inference and usually the result of the teaching they were under. Their experience they need not, should not doubt; their doctrinal inferences they do well to doubt. It is their theory only which pronounces their prayers unheard and their experiences a deception.

(4) It in no way proves the correctness of this theory that young converts "soon feel the need of a deeper work of grace in their hearts," and that older Christians, in the searchings of

the Holy Spirit, come under conviction of inward sin. In the light of a religious experience much is seen to be sin which was not called sin before. Most persons, in their unregenerate state, regard sin as consisting in external acts. It is in the light of the Holy Spirit that its subtle nature is discerned, and the breadth of God's law is understood. Genuine converts are generally more deeply convicted of sin after their conversion than they were before. In their new light they trace the claims of God's law more fully to their inner life. No doubt, young converts feel the need of a deeper work of grace in their hearts. Heaven pity that misguided convert who feels that need but once. Under the searchings of the Spirit they see that their hearts still sin, and they are humbled in self-abasement, and led out in wrestling prayer. If at this juncture they are taught, or if they have been previously instructed, that this conviction has reference to another kind of sin—"inbred sin"—the removal or destruction of which they must seek in order to sanctification, naturally enough they may accept the explanation. Thereafter they may be ready to testify that there is a definite conviction of "inbred sin," and to

them this will mean that sanctification consists in its extermination. Their conviction was experience; but that experience was in no way responsible for the interpretation given of it by themselves or their teachers. We see no reason to believe that a young convert, left to his Bible and the Holy Spirit, would ever think that the deeper work of grace needed in his heart was the destruction of some conquered, but existing, "sin principle" within him. The deep yearning of a Christian's heart, young or old, is that he may live without displeasing God. He longs to abide in full, constant obedience to Christ. Conscious of all this, all the thunders of the last day could not terrify or distress him. His distress and grief, rightly interpreted, are over the fact that his heart sometimes wavers from entire consecration; that, in moments of temptation, he realizes in himself a yielding, a shrinking, incompatible with holiness. In a word, he is convicted of inward acts which involve a self-seeking, a self-pleasing, inconsistent with entire obedience to God. In a work in which the theory of "inbred sin" destruction is advocated at length, the writer puts the case thus: "In our honest judgment, there are few cases of only

partial sanctification, in which every single day does not make bitter work for repentance.”³⁹

This certainly describes conviction of sin, not, however, of the results of the fall of man, but of personal sin and of the need of that sanctification which consists in a state of entire and abiding consecration to God.

(5) The same view may be taken of the blessing which those receive who seek, and, as they think, find the destruction of all inclination to sin. When, in their wrestlings with God for what they understand to be the extermination of a repressed sin-existence within them, they realize measures of the Divine presence never before experienced, very naturally they may conclude that they have received exactly what was in their thought at the time. It has been an oft-repeated experience with Christian people, that, when seeking some specific object in prayer, and at the same time receiving in marked degree a sense of the divine approval and presence, they have interpreted this new and rapturous experience as meaning that the particular object sought was or would be granted. It has been

³⁹ Central Idea of Christianity, pp. 59, 172.

a source of perplexity and trial to many when they have found out otherwise. God may approve the state of mind in which we pray, and may reveal to us his presence and love without in any way pledging himself to answer our prayers *according to our own ideas*. Something different and better may be given than that which we ask. God in his mercy may let us know that he loves us, without indorsing the doctrinal ideas which may be in our minds at the time. So all the experiences of sanctification which are evidenced by a Christlike spirit and an unselfish life may be readily and gladly admitted, without in the least conceding the correctness of the theory which they are often brought forward to support.

(6) It is claimed, however, that a specific witness of the Holy Ghost is given to the fact of the destruction of "inbred sin." It is claimed that this witness is so definite that the persons receiving it know to a certainty that their experience is just the extermination of their "inbred sin," and nothing else. The Holy Spirit is thus claimed as a Divine witness, not only to the genuineness of the experience, but through this to the truth of the doctrine that entire sanctification is the

extermination of the effects of ancestral sin. We are constrained to call in question this high claim to a Divine seal to this particular view of sanctification. In the New Testament the Holy Spirit is promised as a witness to the fact that pardoned sinners are "the children of God." But where is there one passage in which He is promised as a witness to the fact that a believer has experienced a second blessing of "inbred-sin" extermination? Where is he anywhere promised for the purpose of revealing to us the truth of doctrines or theories? I know, we are cautioned against saying just "what the Holy Ghost can or can not do," and we accept the admonition. But we also reciprocate the note of warning against presuming upon what God has *nowhere said he will do*. Here is where Benjamin Harris and George Bell went to pieces in Wesley's time. Here is where Whitefield mistook his way when he received, as he thought, the witness of the Spirit that Calvinism was from God, and that John Wesley's doctrine of free grace was of the devil.⁴⁰ The Holy Spirit is *Divine Presence*, and hence Divine illumina-

⁴⁰ Tyerman's Life of Wesley, I, p. 316.

tion, in the soul of the believer. His work, however, is not to communicate intellectual propositions to the mind, but to reveal Christ to the soul in all the fullness of his saving offices. Whatever he may make known to the Christian of "the things which are freely given us of God," he can not be claimed, upon Scriptural authority, as the Divine witness in a believer to the truth of doctrines.

(7) If we turn to the New Testament, what do we find to guide us in judging of this objection, drawn from Christian experience? Bible students have been accustomed to note the upward movement in the spiritual state of Paul, as indicated by a comparison of his earlier with his later epistles. Wesley thought the fact so marked that he doubted if the apostle was wholly sanctified when he wrote his first epistles. Be this as it may, there is no doubt that he became a holy man. But he nowhere relates any second experience of "inbred sin extermination" subsequent to his conversion. He relates so many manifestations of Christ to him, so much of the incomings of the Holy Spirit within him, that, in the number of his "blessings," it would be as difficult to designate the second as the twenty-

second. The notion that he was justified on the way to Damascus, and sanctified the day upon which Ananias called upon him, is a misconception of the whole account. He never intimates this when he tells the story himself, nor does Luke when he relates it for him. It was at Damascus that he prayed, was baptized, and received the Holy Ghost. It was there that the scales fell from his eyes, and it was at that time and place that Paul locates his conversion from Judaism to Christ and Christianity.

There is sufficient evidence to show that other New Testament Christians were also saved from all sin. They behaved themselves holily, justly, and unblamably; they were filled with the Holy Ghost; they braved all dangers, endured all which the world could inflict upon them, and remained "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." And yet they nowhere relate of themselves that they ever received a second blessing of "inbred-sin" extermination.

Cornelius was an honest soldier, groping in the dim light which was then just dawning upon paganism. He was ordered to send for Peter, who, when he came, preached to him and his

neighbors that "whosoever believeth in him [Christ] shall receive *remission of sins*." Receiving this, the little company were baptized. Cornelius was a religious man before the way of salvation was made known to him; not so much so, however, as was John Wesley before his conversion, and no more so than thousands of unconverted men at the present day. To make this the case of a justified believer, seeking and obtaining the destruction of his "inbred sin," is to read into it what is quite foreign to the history.

The same may be said of those "disciples" whom Paul found at Ephesus, and who had not heard whether there was a Holy Ghost. Paul asked them, "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?" (R. V.) Having accepted of John's baptism, they had promised to believe on Christ when he should appear. The apostle opened to them the fact that Christ had already come. This message they believed, and, according to the New Testament plan for all true converts since the day of Pentecost, they were baptized both with water and with the Holy Ghost. We are compelled to believe that there is not a trace of any "inbred-sin" destruction in any of these passages, nor elsewhere in the ex-

periences related in the New Testament. There is much experience which of necessity includes both regeneration and sanctification; but that particular view of sanctification which makes it to consist in an extermination of the effects of ancestral sin, is not, as we believe, supported by Christian experience, either ancient or modern.

Chapter XI

Some Items of History

I. THERE is no doubt that entire sanctification, as the privilege of believers, was included in the teachings of Methodism from the first. The particular view of sanctification, however, which makes it to consist in the destruction or removal of "inbred sin" was not thus early taught. It did not make its appearance in the Methodist societies until Wesley and his helpers had preached Christian perfection more than twenty-five years. It was 1759 or 1760, when this theory first found a place in the teachings of Methodism. Whitehead, one of the biographers of Wesley, a writer whom Tyerman pronounces "a man well qualified to judge," says: "The doctrine of *perfection*, or perfect love, was undoubtedly taught among Methodists from the beginning, but the *manner* in which it was *now* preached, pressing the people to expect what was called the destruction of the *root* of sin in a moment, was most certainly new. I can find no

trace of it before the period at which I have fixed its introduction.”¹

2. For five or six years, beginning with 1760, the excitement upon this subject in the Methodist societies was intense. It was the absorbing topic in the yearly Conferences; preachers and laymen became its expounders and advocates, and professors of sanctifying grace were numbered by hundreds and thousands. As early as 1765, however, a reaction had set in, and the wave of agitation and excitement receded more rapidly than it came in. Tendencies appeared in connection with the new teaching, which created alarm among both preachers and people. Wesley was greatly troubled with the condition of things in the societies. At the close of 1763 he declared that he had had more care and trouble during the preceding six months, than in several years before.² During the same year, Charles Wesley wrote thus: “I gave warning four years ago of the flood of enthusiasm which has now overflowed us, and of the sect of ranters that should arise out of the witnesses.”³ At the time the new teaching made its appearance, the

¹ Tyerman's *Life of Wesley*, II, p. 461.

² *Ibid.* II, p. 432. ³ *Ibid.* II, p. 462.

London society consisted of upwards of twenty-three hundred members, of whom Wesley could say, "None, we hope, live in any willful sin."⁴ A year later he is there, "guarding preachers and people from running into extremes."⁵ In 1761 he issued "Further Thoughts on Christian Perfection," concerning which he was compelled to say, however, "Had the cautions given therein been observed, how much scandal had been prevented!"⁶ The next year he published "Cautions and Directions Given to the Greatest Professors in the Methodist Societies."⁷ His cautions and directions did not avail to stay the torrent. A spirit of harsh judging arose. Some who professed the highest attainments in holiness declared that the Methodist people and preachers were dead to God. For a time they excepted Wesley himself, but soon discerned that he was dead also. They said he "pulled down perfection."⁸ One of his helpers declared that Wesley and his brother both contradicted the highest truths, and that almost all who "called themselves ministers of Christ, or preach-

⁴ Wesley's Works, IV, p. 52. ⁵ Ibid. IV, p. 110.

⁶ Ibid. IV, p. 112. ⁷ Ibid. IV, p. 146.

⁸ Ibid. IV, p. 145.

ers of Christ, contended for sin to remain in the heart as long as we live.”⁹ Members of societies were classified as those who were entirely sanctified and those who were not. Those who did not profess the attainment of this grace were declared to be incapable of teaching those who were in this state. They said of Wesley, “Blind John is not capable of teaching us.”¹⁰ Some claimed to have received a third blessing, by which they were above temptation or the need of self-examination.¹¹ They taught that, till a believer is sanctified, he is under the curse of God.¹² A hurtful religious egotism was developed. Wesley writes to one of the number: “You appear to think (I will not affirm you do) that none understands the doctrine of sanctification like you. Nay, you sometimes speak as if none understood it besides you. . . . You appear to undervalue the experience of almost every one in comparison of your own.”¹³ He sought to allay harsh judging by preaching on “Judge not, that ye be not judged.” So far was this from producing the desired effect that

⁹ Wesley's Works, IV, p. 146. ¹⁰ Ibid. p. 148.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 200. ¹² Ibid. VI, 731. ¹³ Ibid. 758.

some said, "If the devil had been in the pulpit, he would not have preached such a sermon."¹⁴

At times Wesley seemed to have been despondent over the outlook for Methodism. He noted a departure from former conditions. In 1764, on visiting Madeley, he wrote: "It was a great comfort to me to converse once more with a Methodist of the old stamp, denying himself, taking up his cross, and resolved to be altogether a Christian."¹⁵ In examining those who professed sanctification at Leeds, he said, "I found reason to hope that fourteen of them were not deceived."¹⁶ In 1763 he spoke of being left without help, even in the most trying times. He said, "Only Mr. Romaine has shown a truly sympathizing spirit, and acted the part of a brother." And yet, not a month later, this very Mr. Romaine wrote a letter to a friend, in which he said: "I pity Mr. John from my heart. His societies are in great confusion, and the point which brought them into the wilderness of rant and madness is still as much insisted on as ever."¹⁷ Two hundred followed Maxfield in a secession from the London society, and move-

¹⁴ Wesley's Works, IV, 144. ¹⁵ Ibid. IV, 188.

¹⁶ Ibid. IV, p. 93. ¹⁷ Tyerman, II, p. 463.

ments of the same kind took place in other localities.¹⁸ The Methodists as a body, however, did not become fanatics, nor did they give up Christian perfection. The facts we have related refer to a few years following the introduction of that new teaching concerning sanctification, which makes it to consist in the "destruction of the root of sin, instantaneously received." That this state of things followed so quickly upon the incoming of this new teaching is certainly significant. That, in the space of a few years, a reactionary movement set in which for a time threatened to sweep the whole subject from Methodism, is equally suggestive.

3. The reaction is a matter of history. Wesley was between two fires. He desired to save his people from fanaticism on the one hand, and on the other from giving up the whole subject of sanctification. He exhorted the professors of this grace to test themselves by the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. He urged them not to be particular to name their blessing.¹⁹ He repeatedly declined to insist upon the theory that entire sanctification involves the *destruction*,

¹⁸ Tyerman, II, p. 441.

¹⁹ Wesley's Works, IV, III; VI, p. 772.

rather than the *suspension* of "inbred sin."²⁰ Charles Wesley came to regard those who "testified of the time and manner in which they were delivered from the root of sin," as self-deceived.²¹ Wesley thought his brother placed salvation from all sin too high; that he called that sin which is not sin.²² He said, "Though it be true, all sin is a transgression of this (perfect) law, yet it is by no means true, on the other hand, that all transgressions of this law are sin. No, not at all; only all voluntary transgressions of it; none else are sins against the gospel law."²³ Whitefield thought that the professors of sanctification, if Christians at all, were in a very legal state.²⁴

Wesley admitted that he thought some had "imagined themselves saved from sin upon the word of others."²⁵ Early in 1765 he visited the societies in London and Barnardscastle, and found that "about two-thirds of the high professors had lost their confidence."²⁶ Later he thought that, "of those who professed to obtain it, hardly one in thirty retained it." The saintly

²⁰ Wesley's Works, VI, 752. ²¹ Tyerman, II, p. 442.

²² Ibid. VI, 668. ²³ Ibid. VI, 775. ²⁴ Ibid. I, p. 347.

²⁵ Wesley's Works, VI, p. 665. ²⁶ Tyerman, II, p. 535.

Mary Bosanquet, afterwards the wife of Fletcher, had ceased to profess it.²⁷ In 1768, Wesley himself said, "I believe Christian perfection is not attained by any of the children of God till they are what the apostle John terms fathers."²⁸ He feared that the Methodists would let the whole subject of sanctification drop.²⁹ "I find," he says, "that almost all our preachers in every circuit have done with Christian perfection. They say they believe it, but they never preach it, or not once a quarter."³⁰ Wesley seemed to feel himself standing almost alone. The Methodists had so recoiled from the new teaching and its effects that it was difficult to rally them to the support of the doctrine of Christian perfection at all. To his brother Charles he wrote, in 1768: "But what shall we do? I think it is high time that you and I, at least, should come to a point. Shall we go on in asserting perfection against all the world? Or shall we quietly let it drop? We really must do one or the other, and, I apprehend, the sooner the better. . . . At length, let us *fix* something for good and

²⁷ Tyerman, III, p. 59. ²⁸ Wesley's Works, VI, p. 744.

²⁹ Ibid, VI, p. 671. ³⁰ Ibid, VI, p. 673.

all, either the same as formerly, or different from it." ⁸¹

These bits of history are not without their meaning. They show that, following directly upon the introduction of the new teaching concerning the nature of Christian perfection, the Methodist societies passed into a period of agitation, confusion, disputation, and more or less of discord and fanaticism. They show also that, succeeding these few years in which the new theory was so diligently urged, and corresponding experience by many professed, there came a recoil which, for a time, well-nigh banished the whole subject from the ministry of Methodism. That this state of things should at once attend and follow the introduction of this particular view of sanctification is significant. If the theory and the conditions, which followed, had no real connection with each other, the coincidence is certainly remarkable.

⁸¹ Wesley's Works, VI, pp. 671, 672.

Chapter VII

Effects Upon the Churches

IN the preceding chapter some facts were pointed out concerning the introduction into the Methodist societies of that theory of entire sanctification to which objections have here been offered. It can hardly be doubted that results, somewhat similar in kind, often attend this same teaching at the present time.

Let it be observed, however, that it was not the preaching of entire sanctification, as included in the Christian calling and privilege, which threw Wesley's societies into confusion and discord. It was the introduction of a *particular view* of this subject, with its associated ideas and methods. This view was, by many, insisted upon as the essential doctrine itself, and was urged upon Christian believers as the holiness required by the Bible. Nor is it Christian holiness lived, and preached, and upheld as the standard of Christian privilege, which leads to the results which we too often see in Churches at the present time. It is rather *a theory of holiness*, urged

upon Christians as that which is demanded by the Word of God and the purities of heaven, but which many are obliged either to reject or to assume a position false to their own convictions.

With this particular theory of holiness certain cognate ideas and attendant methods have existed, and do now exist, which, by many in the Churches, are regarded as incorrect and unprofitable. And yet these views and methods are not unfrequently insisted upon as furnishing a test of loyalty to the Methodist doctrine of Christian perfection. No arraignment is here intended of the motives of those who maintain this theory, nor is their sincerity or piety in any way called in question. But we express the convictions of not a few in the Church when we say that this theory of what it is to be holy, which was new to Methodism in 1759, is now doing Methodism and the cause of Christ harm.

1. This particular theory of holiness is often insisted upon as essential to both the doctrine and the experience of sanctification. This practically assumes that those who differ from its teachings reject the doctrine of sanctification, and are in no condition to know its experience.

If some other view is taken in reference to what entire sanctification is, it is often met by the response that those who entertain such views "do not believe in holiness." Even those whose profession of perfected love would seem to promise the greatest degree of charity, often refuse to allow that those who differ from them in view may still be as honest and as earnest in their efforts for the promotion of holiness as themselves. This rigid insistence, that none believe in holiness who do not accept this particular statement of it, has done, and is doing, great injury to the cause of Christ. It exhibits a narrowness and uncharitableness in which men do not recognize holiness. It does not become ordinary Christian profession. It develops opposition to itself from the feeling that individual convictions are not respected. It works alienation of feeling among brethren and divisions in Churches.

2. The same may be said in reference to some of the methods usually adopted in connection with the advocacy of this theory. Such stress is placed upon them that those who can not see their way clear to act with them are set down as "not in the light," or as "opposed to holiness."

If some decline to present themselves as seekers of "the second blessing," which, *as then and there set forth*, they may not believe to be either commanded or promised in the Word of God, they are given to understand that they have fallen away from Methodism, or that they are "brain-proud," or that they are under the power of a time-serving spirit. Such as do not stand up with those who rise to testify in that manner that they are wholly sanctified, are at once classed as unsanctified. If some are disposed to maintain that they have good reasons for not accepting the views presented and the invitations given, they are set down as "ashamed to stand up for holiness," or as "not in sympathy with the holiness movement." Prayers are sometimes offered for those who do not accept the teachings and approve the methods in question, in tone and spirit much the same as those offered for impenitent sinners, and with the apparent assumption of a perfect knowledge of their spiritual state. The Church and some of its prominent ministers and members are often criticised with a harshness and severity of language which might well call to mind the reproving words of Jesus: "Ye know not what manner

of spirit ye are of.”¹ Let the following serve as illustrations:

“There has gone an impression out over this land that it is not dignified for a minister to tell his experience; and so largely has this sentiment spread that even Methodists think it derogatory to their ecclesiastical dignity to stand up and tell how they were converted.”

“The great mass of Church members are color-blind, and when God Almighty hangs a red flag out, they say it is blue, and go dashing on.”

“Our sermons are full of man, man, man; and the majority of preaching is magnifying man, glorifying man—the brilliancy of man, the dignity of man—until I get sick and disgusted with the everlasting hash and rehash.”

“The Church is full of ecclesiastical monkeys, that preach simply that we are to imitate the beautiful life of Jesus.”²

“The popular preachers of this day never say much about *sin*. The human heart is overlooked, and people somehow think that religion consists in doing right on the outside.” ■

¹ Luke ix, 55.

² Love Abounding, pp. 21, 136, 319, 206. ³ Ibid. p. 361.

All this, and much more to the same effect, are in a book entitled "Love Abounding," one of several books by the same author, and all written for the special purpose of promoting the work, and illustrating the experience of entire sanctification.

Wesley discovered the same spirit and type of things in connection with the new theory of sanctification. In 1762 he wrote to one who had made this subject a specialty: "I dislike something which has the appearance of pride, of overvaluing yourselves and undervaluing others, particularly the preachers; thinking not only that they are blind, and that they are not sent of God, but even that they are dead, dead to God, and walking in the way to hell; that they are going one way, and you another; that they have no life in them; your speaking of yourselves as though you were the only men who knew and taught the gospel, and as if not only all the clergy, but all the Methodists beside, were in utter darkness; . . . your want of meekness, gentleness, long-suffering, your impatience of contradiction, your counting every man your enemy that reproves or admonishes you in love; your bigotry and narrow-

ness of spirit, loving in a manner only those that love you; your censoriousness, proneness to think hardly of all who do not exactly agree with you.”⁴

We are more than glad to admit that this spirit is by no means universal among those who maintain the theory and adopt the methods in question. There are many precious exceptions, but the way and tone which we have described are so commonly connected with the advocacy of this particular view that it is but reasonable to conclude that the one naturally results from the other.

3. Wherever this theory of Christian holiness is taught, it generally becomes a specialty. Special meetings for the “promotion of holiness” are thought to be necessary, the implication being that other religious meetings are not for that purpose. Associations are formed, other than Church organizations, for the special work of promoting sanctification as understood by those who accept this view. Certain religious papers are devoted specifically to this subject, and are known as “holiness papers.” Some ministers

⁴ Wesley's Works, IV, pp. 140, 141.

come to regard themselves as specially called to the work of "preaching holiness," and conducting "holiness meetings." This specialism has been fruitful in the development of the class idea in Churches. A line is practically drawn at the point at which the experience indicated by the theory is professed. Those making this claim come to constitute a kind of school by themselves. Their common views and sympathies are allowed to separate them from others, and to crystallize them into a circle of their own. The tendency of this upon those thus grouped as the special defenders of the doctrine, and possessors of the experience of holiness, is too often seen in the direction of a religious egotism. As this appears, others are less influenced for good by them on that account. They are charged with clannishness, and with assuming to be better than others. Their faults are quickly seen and uncharitably noted. In standing away from them and their particular views, other members dismiss the subject of sanctification altogether. One class is spoken of as "sanctification cranks," the other as "opposed to holiness." In this state of things not a few drop into the delusion that they can be good Chris-

tians all the same, and have nothing to do with sanctification, nor even aim at a salvation from committing sin. It is thus that specialism on the subject of holiness places its professors in a "charmed circle," in which they are, to their detriment, surrounded constantly with the spirit of congratulation, while other professors of religion are led to make very little of sanctification, and to excuse themselves for what is sinful, because they do not belong to the "holiness set." That all this is the necessary result of faithfully preaching the Scripture doctrine of holiness, we do not believe. It is rather now, as at the first, the result of teaching a theory of holiness which many in the Church do not regard as Scriptural, but which is being presented as essential to the doctrine, and even to the experience, of entire sanctification.

From this type of teaching and its results original Methodism recoiled, and from like teaching and similar results Methodism largely recoils now. Granted that, to some extent, the indifference manifested upon this subject is owing to the presence of unregenerated and backslidden members in our Churches, this by no means accounts for the fact that such large num-

bers in almost all our Churches practically reject the theory of holiness here objected to. It is not mere indifference that is to be accounted for; it is a practical repudiation of the theory and the manner in which it is more commonly presented. Every soul possessed of a genuine religious experience loves holiness, and longs to be holy. There can be no exceptions to this statement. But many in our Churches who bear testimony to regenerating grace, and who give good evidence that their testimony is true, do not accept the theory of holiness under consideration, nor will they commit themselves to the methods usually adopted in connection with it. It is the theory and its attendant measures which are responsible for the recoil.

4. This turning away from the subject of sanctification on the part of professing Christians is most manifest where this theory is most specifically and constantly urged. With those who embrace and teach it, there is very generally a tendency to make it the one subject upon all religious occasions. Ministers who embrace this view are often led to preach so constantly and exclusively upon it that they come to be regarded as narrow, and as making the subject

a "hobby." All the faults and shortcomings of Church members are attributed to the fact that they have not sought the removal of their "inbred sin." If sinners are not awakened and saved by scores and hundreds, the failure is ascribed to the same cause. Assuming the correctness of the theory, its friends find it everywhere in the Bible, and at all stages of Divine revelation. Abraham, they say, was justified before he entered Canaan, but was wholly sanctified at Mount Moriah. Jacob experienced justification and regeneration at Bethel, but received the "second blessing" at Peniel. The rest to which Jesus invites all who labor and are heavy laden is not for those who find forgiveness of sin, but only for those who obtain the removal of their "inbred sin." The "second benefit," which Paul desired the Corinthian Church might receive, should he be permitted to visit them again, is made to mean the "second blessing" as defined by the theory before us. When Paul compares Christians to soldiers, he means those only who are cleansed from "indwelling sin;" for "the soldier life of a Christian dates from the time he receives this blessing." All who are "not in the light;" all who are "not satisfied with their

religious experiences," are exhorted to seek at once for the specific cleansing from inbred sin. This blessing is thus often held out to almost all classes and religious conditions, and there is little doubt that many come to feel relieved at the thought that their lukewarm, unconsecrated, darkened state is not the result of grieving the Holy Spirit by voluntary sin, but the unbidden effects of Adamic transgression. Is it any wonder that this subject, thus treated, becomes to many repetitious and unedifying? Is it at all strange that a theory which naturally leads to such a treatment of this great theme does not carry the convictions of the whole Church?

Before me lies an exposition of Matthew xi, 28-30, from the pen of a prominent defender of the theory in hand. It runs thus: "O, how many times this Scripture has been butchered by just giving it all to the unconverted, and inviting sinners to come to Christ! 'You come to Christ, and he will give you soul-rest, and you will find that his yoke is easy and the burden light.' And they have come, and repented, and been converted, and joined the Church, and then found out that the preacher told a lie. They found out that the yoke was *not* easy, and the bur-

den was *not* light. There are one million Christians to-day in this country serving God, that are struggling to get to heaven, and they *know* that the yoke is not easy, and the burden is not light. One thousand preachers are preaching the gospel, and they are talking away at it; and hundreds of deacons, and stewards, and trustees, and official members, and superintendents, and Christian workers are serving God the best they can; but it is up-hill business. Jesus does not say that every Christian finds the yoke easy and the burden light. He does not say *that*. He says that when you get the second rest, then the yoke will be easy and the burden light. That is what he says." ■

This unauthorized application of the passage illustrates at once the spirit and demands of the theory, its depreciated idea of regenerating grace, and the tendency in its defenders to fill the whole horizon of religious thought and experience with this view. By this a good cause is injured.

5. There is a tendency in the theory under discussion to turn the thought from Christ to an "experience," a "blessing," an impersonal

⁵ Love Abounding, p. 306.

something which is supposed to exist as an *effect* within them. This tendency arises almost inevitably from the mental concept which the theory creates. Its great essential is what is claimed to be an instantaneous work of the Holy Spirit, by which "inbred sin" is removed or destroyed. The attention is thus directed to what the Holy Spirit is said to do at *one given moment*, rather than to what Christ does and is to the believer *every moment*. This is seen in the stress which is placed upon "getting it" and "holding on to it." Rightly viewed, there is no "*it*" in the case. There is no sanctification for a moment apart from Christ, no matter what blessings may have at any previous time been received. The Holy Spirit in the soul of a believer is *Divine Presence*. In His illumination, the soul apprehends and trusts Christ. His coming into the heart is not a doing something involving physical change; he does that moment what he would *constantly do*. In sanctifying his people, Christ does no more for them at any one moment than he would do every succeeding moment. In sanctification he becomes the indwelling life of believers. They live spiritually as he lives in them. The conditions continuously met, he

sanctifies us *all the time*. To conceive of this as "a blessing," first, second, or fortieth, is to miss the Scriptural idea.

6. This leads us to remark that the theory and teaching in question tend to produce in the Church a superficial type of sanctification. I am well aware that this remark will be regarded by some as unappreciative, and, perhaps, as unpardonably incorrect; but it is made with a painful conviction of its truth. It has already been shown that this theory locates the work of sanctification in the passive elements of our nature. It maintains that the voluntary states are all right before the specific work of "inbred-sin" destruction is effected. Hence this work of destruction or removal must take place, if at all, in the realm of the passive. This theory, then, teaches us that supreme importance should be attached to the involuntary states of the mind. In the nature of the case, this must tend to lower the estimate which should be placed upon voluntary activity and a holy life, and to overvalue mere effects, feelings, joys, blessings, and impressions. It is true that many who teach this view utter repeated cautions against emphasizing these passive states; but the cautions show

that the tendency exists. We do not refer to cases of wild fanaticism, but to tendencies more generally observed. Not unfrequently persons accepting this theory have, in their minds, so separated "the blessing of sanctification" from the voluntary states that, though they have no hesitation in professing "the blessing," they are shocked at the thought of claiming to live without committing sin. Sure they are that they are fully saved from "inbred sin," but in no way claiming that they are saved from committing sin. Is this a Scriptural type of sanctification? The same tendency appears in the fact that very many who represent this theory testify to having repeatedly "lost the blessing." The possibility of falling from sanctifying grace will not be denied, but it must also be admitted that the Bible emphasizes this state as characterized by *permanency*. It is, in fact, the distinguishing feature of Christian holiness. In the words of Dr. William Butler, it is "completed by a permanent consecration of all our ransomed powers of thought, affection, and action to the service of Almighty God." For a time Wesley doubted if entire sanctification was ever lost. Afterwards he admitted that it might be; but, as Dr. Daniel

Steele well observes: "It is evident that he was not a believer in that kind of perfect love which may be experienced to day and lost to-morrow; a species which many mistaken professors avow, to the great detriment of the genuine experience."⁶ But if sanctification is a work wrought in the states of the sensibility, what could be more natural than, in the realization of new experiences of spiritual joy, to infer that the fresh light and rapture were the coveted removal of "inbred sin," especially if the mind was occupied by that thought and view at the time? And if this experience is conceived to be a work done at a particular moment in the past, to be referred to as "a blessing," no wonder it is lost. That sanctification which consists in *getting something done to us*, rather than in receiving Christ as he is made known to us in the light of the Holy Spirit, is certainly a superficial type. And so long as the energies of the Christian are absorbed in efforts to *keep* his "blessing of sanctification," he does not yet see what Scriptural sanctification is. "You will never keep anything you can call a blessing."⁷ Sanctifi-

⁶ Love Enthroned, p. 131.

⁷ Bishop J. M. Thoburn.

cation is not keeping a blessing; it is allowing the Mighty Savior to keep us. It is joyfully granted that there are many among those who accept the theory here questioned, and who profess the experience which it indicates, who give all needful evidence that they are holy men and women. But we are compelled to fear, and more than fear, that the number is not small of those who are led by this theory and its current methods to think themselves in a spiritual state, which, in fact, they have not known. We do not assume to know the hearts of others, nor will we take the attitude of a cold critic in matters of religious experience; but for the correctness of the judgment here expressed we appeal to the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, and to the charitable observation of Christian believers.

7. In connection with this theory of sanctification great stress is generally placed upon "professing the blessing." This was the case when the new teaching first appeared in Methodism, and it remains true of the same teaching still. Those who believe themselves "cleansed from inbred sin," are taught to avow this specific fact publicly and frequently. They are instructed

that they must do this as a means of retaining what they have received; that if they fail to do this, or if they shrink from using those terms which, according to the nomenclature of the theory, denote the removal or destruction of "inbred sin," they will "lose the blessing." In some circles it is urged that profession will bring into the light those who have lingering doubts whether or not they have received the specific blessing required by the theory; that it will give strength to those who are new and weak in the experience; and that it will put the soul under bonds to maintain its position, and thus destroy all the bridges behind it. A prominent teacher of this theory gives as a reason for this profession the following: "No one but yourself knows about it; for sanctification does n't make such a change in the outward life; so you must tell it."⁸

Out of this matter of "professing the blessing" some of the troubles and misfortunes of early Methodism arose, and from the same source troubles and misfortunes still arise. Charles Wesley and Whitefield, as well as many others, discredited the testimony of those who made

⁸ Love Abounding, p. 246.

this profession. It does not appear that they thought them intentional deceivers, but that they regarded them as self-deceived,—thinking themselves in a state which they had not reached. A “sect of ranters” had arisen out of the “witnesses,” who overestimated both their wisdom and their piety. These could be neither instructed nor controlled, and by their extravagances excited prejudice against the subject, and brought reproach upon the societies.

Wesley found it necessary to preach and write upon the subject. While he believed that many were the subjects of a genuine work of grace, he thought others who claimed to have the witness of the Spirit that their “inbred sin” was removed, did not give good evidence that this was the fact. He describes them as “wanting in gentleness,” “in goodness,” not kind and loving in spirit; “wanting in meekness, quietness of spirit, composure, evenness of temper. They were up and down; sometimes high, sometimes low.” Some were “wanting in temperance” in food and sleep, and in preferring that “preaching, reading, or conversation which gives them transient joy and comfort before that which brings godly sorrow, and instruction in right-

eousness.”⁹ He cautioned those who professed this state against making much of particular terms and phrases. “Do not perplex yourself at all,” he says, “about what you shall call it.” “It may be called by this or that name; names are of little consequence.” He warned all who professed this grace to “avoid all appearance of boasting, to speak with the deepest humility and reverence.” He says: “Avoid all magnificent, pompous words; indeed, you need give it no general name; neither perfection, sanctification, the second blessing, nor the having attained. Rather speak of the particulars which God has wrought for you.”¹⁰

These cautions, given to all who professed the experience of entire sanctification, are significant as indicating a state of things in which they were greatly needed. The manner in which Wesley characterizes those who, as he thinks, fail to give good evidence that they make this profession intelligently is equally suggestive. But extended acquaintance with the Church at the present time has convinced wise and godly men that such cautions and warnings are needed now.

⁹ Wesley's Works, VI, pp. 518, 519.

¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 524, 765, 772.

They see the injury done to the cause of real holiness by this unwise insistence upon the profession of "the blessing." We cite a few utterances of some who are well-known advocates and defenders of Christian perfection.

"There is, though, we think, even among some of us, an over-anxiousness to extend the profession. It is urged in an unbecoming manner, and, as a consequence, it is often indiscreetly made. . . . Never declare your attainment to be greater than it is, with the hope that such a profession will bring you into an advanced and better enjoyment."

"Do not attach too much importance to profession; here is one point where you are likely to be misled, hence the greater need of caution. Mr. Wesley and Mr. Fletcher found it necessary to advise a discreet and well-timed profession in their day. The admonition is certainly quite as much needed now. . . . Do not fall into the delusion that specific profession should be confidently and often repeated. Depend upon it, it will savor more of pride than of grace; it will influence to the injury rather than the advancement of the cause. . . . You are tempted that it is for the glory of God. There is room

for doubt whether this is not sometimes a snare." "It is holiness, not the profession of it, that will give us influence both with God and man." ¹¹

"If we have not a blessing, it is preposterous to profess it in order to receive it. It is selfish to profess any state of grace in order to retain it." ¹²

"There are few, if any, *explicit* professions of holiness or of Christian perfection in the Holy Scriptures. We search in vain for such testimonies as these: 'I am holy;' 'I am sanctified;' 'I am perfect.' Even the sinless Son of man, who could rightfully make these *explicit* declarations, chose other ways of professing his spotless purity and faultless perfection." ¹³

We may add to these timely admonitions the fact that Mr. Wesley himself never professed to have attained entire sanctification. This was evidently not because he scrupled to speak of his religious experience in any manner calculated to do good. He gives us an account of his conversion with an utmost particularity. The place, the day, the time by the watch, and the particular truth which opened his mind to the way of

¹¹ Christian Purity, pp. 216, 217, 305, 306, 318.

¹² Love Enthroned, p. 180. ¹³ Ibid. p. 181.

faith are all given. He makes modest mention of seasons of spiritual blessing in his subsequent Christian life, but in no instance does he profess entire sanctification or claim to have received "the second blessing."¹⁴ He mentions many cases of others whom he believes to have attained holiness of heart and life, but he nowhere professes this attainment himself.

A prominent writer upon this subject affirms as a fact that Wesley did make this profession.¹⁵ He cites the following passages from his writings in proof of the statement:

"In the evening, while I was reading prayers at Snowsfield, I found such light and strength as I never remember to have had before. I saw every thought as well as action or word, just as it was rising in my heart, and whether it was right before God, or tainted with pride or selfishness."

"I waked the next morning, by the grace of God, in the same spirit; and about eight, being with two or three that believed in Jesus, I felt such an awe and tender sense of the presence of God as greatly confirmed me therein, so that

¹⁴ Wesley's Works, III, p. 324; IV, 140.

¹⁵ Perfect Love, p. 148.

God was before me all the day long. I sought him and found him in every place, and could truly say when I lay down at night, Now I have lived a day."

"You have over and over denied instantaneous sanctification to me, but I have known and taught it above these twenty years."

"Many years since I saw that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. I began by following after it, and inciting all with whom I had any intercourse to do the same. Ten years after, God gave me a clearer view than I had before of the way how to attain it, by faith in the Son of God. And immediately I declared to all, 'We are saved from sin; we are made holy by faith.' This I testified in private, in public, in print, and God confirmed it by a thousand witnesses." ¹⁶

On these quotations we remark: (1) In the first quotation there is not a word in reference to the subject of sanctification, nor an intimation that the subject was in Wesley's mind. The paragraph in his *Journal*, from which it is taken, merely states that, after a day in which he was

¹⁶ Wesley's Works, VII, p. 38; III, 324; IV, 140.

“unusually lifeless and heavy,” he had the precious season with God there related. What living Christian but could write a similar entry in his diary? (2) This passage was written in 1744; and, in 1767, Wesley writes to Dr. Dodd: “I have told all the world I am not perfect; and yet you allow me to be a Methodist. I tell you flat, I have not attained the character I draw.”¹⁷

The question is not whether Wesley was or was not a holy man; it is whether he professed entire sanctification as a “second blessing” in the paragraph cited. We can see no intimation of such a meaning. (3) The second citation is equally foreign to the purpose for which it is quoted. It is taken from a letter to Thomas Maxfield, who was a violent advocate of the new doctrine of sanctification, and had accused Wesley of having changed his views upon the subject. Wesley denies the intimation, and declares that he is teaching what he had known and taught for twenty years. The whole letter shows that Wesley and Maxfield differed in their views of the subject; but, from beginning to end, there is not a line in which the former makes any men-

¹⁷ Wesley's Works, IV, p. 245.

tion of his own religious experience. (4) The third quotation is no more in point. It is taken from a letter in which Wesley relates how he was led to see the way of salvation by faith. Though the letter was written in 1771, he refers back to a time in his early ministry, and cites in evidence his sermon on "Salvation by Faith," published in 1738. Was he professing sanctification when telling how he was led out of his legal state into a knowledge of the way of faith? If Wesley was, in these quotations, professing the experience of entire sanctification, why do not those who now claim that they teach what, and as he did, make profession of it in the same manner? They certainly would lose no blessing, but would gain much influence among the Churches by so doing. (5) Tyerman says upon this point: "Wesley preached the doctrine, but he was slow to believe those who professed to experience it, and it is a fact more remarkable, that, so far as there is evidence to show, Wesley never, to the day of his death, professed as much as this himself. Hundreds, if not thousands, of his followers did; perhaps he himself was restrained from doing so by his dislike to high profession or by a conscientious fear that he hardly reached

the standard above [which he had] set up.”¹⁸ We think it quite probable that the injury which he had seen result from the professions of those who were really superficial in piety, but were not aware of it themselves, and the undue stress placed upon *profession* by those whom he addressed as “the greatest professors in the Methodist societies,” had its influence in shaping his convictions of duty in the case. (6) Nor was Wesley alone among the holy men of that time in not professing entire sanctification. He says of his saintly co-worker, Fletcher: “He was upon all occasions uncommonly reserved in speaking of himself, whether in writing or conversation. He hardly ever said anything of himself, unless it slipped from him unawares. And among the great number of papers which he has left, there is scarce a page, except that single account of his conversion to God, relative either to his own inward experience, or the transactions of his life.”¹⁹ Like the lamented Bishop Edmund S. Janes, “on the point of his personal religious experience, whether in private or public, he was rather reticent than otherwise. He spoke spar-

¹⁸ Life and Times of Wesley, I, p. 462.

¹⁹ Wesley's Works, VI, p. 467.

ingly of his attainments; nothing of his sacrifices or labors; but much of Christ and his salvation.”²⁰ Yet, in writing to his family, he could say, “I have for years daily consecrated myself unreservedly to God.” “I seem to get nearer to God in prayer, to have more constantly a consciousness of God’s gracious presence.”²¹ These were not instances of sanctification which must be told in order that others might know them. They bore their own witness in the lives, labors, and spirit of the men. They illustrate the remark of the sainted Dr. Bragdon when asked if he did not think it his duty to “profess the blessing of holiness.” He replied: “When we have holiness we shall not need to profess it; it will profess itself.”

²⁰ Life of Bishop Janes, p. 410.

²¹ Ibid. pp. 346, 409.

Concluding Remarks

1. THE views presented in the foregoing pages include the following particulars:

(1) Sin is voluntary transgression of known law. This is not only a proper definition of *some sin*, but is true of *all sin*. In this respect there are no two kinds of sin.

(2) In order to the beginning of an experience of salvation there must be a renunciation and purposed abandonment of all which is known to be sin, and, by all to whom he is made known, Christ must be accepted as a sin-atoning Savior.

(3) These conditions met, the repentant sinner receives forgiveness of all his sin, and the Holy Spirit takes possession of his being, from which he had been excluded by sin. The saved soul is pardoned and regenerated.

(4) Regeneration is sanctification begun—installed. So long as consecration on the part of the new believer continues entire—that is, up to the measure of apprehended obligation—and his faith remains unwavering, he is saved, he is holy. During any period, long or short,

through which his consecration and faith waver, intermit, fluctuate, he is not wholly, continuously, confirmedly, sanctified.

(5) Entire, permanent sanctification is a Christian attainment, with few, if any, exceptions, subsequent to the first moment of regeneration in time, but in nature one and the same.

(6) It does not consist in the destruction or annihilation of any thing in the soul.

(7) Nor does it consist in the removal or extermination of the effects of ancestral sin. These effects, being in no proper sense sin, neither their removal nor their destruction is necessarily included in salvation from sin.

(8) Entire sanctification does consist in unreserved, uninterrupted consecration of the being to God; a state in which the believer, through the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, revealing Christ to him as an all-sufficient Savior, lives triumphant over temptation, constantly saved from committing sin.

(9) The attainment of this state is, as a matter of fact, generally through successive reaches of faith, in which the soul is lifted nearer and nearer the point of permanent consecration,

until it casts itself, without a fear, wholly upon Christ as a present and all-adequate Savior from sinning.

(10) Though this point of experience, compared with the hour of forgiveness, may stand in the thought as a second spiritual epoch, it is much less likely to consist in any one "blessing" than it is to be the culminating result of many seasons of spiritual illumination, heart-searching, self-abasement, and humble boldness in believing. Hence it is treated in the Scriptures as a point of mature Christian experience—a perfecting of the Christian graces.

2. In the light of this subject we have indicated the true test of Christian experience. It is not how we feel; it is not peace nor rapture; it is not what was done for us or in us at any one given moment; it is to what an extent we are continuously saved from committing sin. The question is not whether what we inherited from Adam has been destroyed in us or removed from us. It is how permanent is our consecration; how steady our hold of Christ as a Savior from sin. We gave all to Christ in sacred purpose of heart when we sought pardon of sin. "Do we

stand to the gift?"¹ How uniformly do we choose the will of God instead of our own? We yielded wholly to his will at the first, as we *then* understood it. Do we yield wholly to his will as we *now* understand it? Have we turned back from new duties which have come into view with increasing light? Are we giving place to what we regard as little sins, as though anything could be little which is sin? Are our hearts fully set upon pleasing God in all things? Have we increasing power over temptation? Do we stand where we formerly fell?

3. We have expressed the opinion that the theory of sanctification which makes it to consist in the destruction or removal of "inbred sin," together with the methods more commonly adopted for its promotion, have resulted in many cases of high profession and superficial experience. If these lines are read in the spirit in which they are written, this judgment will not be regarded as "opposition to holiness." Holiness is an abiding victory over selfishness. It is utterly incompatible with self-seeking. It does not exist where the heart indulges resent-

¹ Wesley's Works, VI, p. 728.

ment, ill-will, covetousness, or envy. Its supreme choice is to be right with God and true to man. It is no more consistent with deception and scheming for place than with drunkenness and lechery. Holy men and women do not murmur; they are not self-asserting nor boastful. They do not seek the uppermost rooms at feasts, nor the chief seats in the synagogues. They do not pose as either heroes or martyrs. They will not seek fame, either in the world or in religion. Is there no need of heart-searching and watchfulness, lest that subtle enemy, the love of conceded superiority, attack us in disguise, and lead us to accept from good men that which we refuse from a wicked world? The pious Rutherford said: "I think some persons have been hurt by being set up and extolled for their great attainments in religion." It is possible for men and women, claiming holy experiences, to love, and even to seek the admiration of a charmed circle, while they weaken in the presence of self-denial and self-sacrifice for the salvation of men. It is possible for them to make so much of "good times," "happy meetings," and joyful frames, in the fellowship of a sympathizing class, that the most trying work

of the Church falls upon those less accustomed to relate their experiences.

4. Teachers of the theory mentioned are accustomed to reiterate the statement that sanctification, meaning by that the extermination of "inbred sin" from the heart, is the one essential condition of spiritual power. Preachers are told that this is the secret of ministerial success. The Churches are admonished that, if their members would but seek and obtain this destruction of their inbred sin, awakened sinners would come in crowds to their altars, and the general Church is told that, if this blessing was generally enjoyed, the world would soon be converted to Christ. The fact must be fully accepted that the spiritual power of the Church and ministry is in the degree in which they are holy. Likeness to Christ, oneness with him in spirit, sacrifice and labor—this is spiritual power; nor can it be in anything besides.

But where is the evidence that spiritual power follows in the line of this particular teaching? Marked instances of spiritual power have all along appeared in the Church, but they have been in no way confined to the type of teaching under consideration. It is not difficult to find

ministers who have been much less successful in winning souls to Christ, after taking up this theory of sanctification, than they were before. It would be just as easy to find Churches, in which quite a number of their members have taught the theory, and professed the blessing of sin-extermination, with no discernible addition to the spiritual power of those societies. There may be exceptions, but as a rule these same persons have been no more successful in soul-saving, to say the least, than others of their brethren. We regret to say that there are Churches in which the very persons claiming this blessing, and teaching it as a condition of spiritual power, have constituted the least influential element in them. "Free Methodists," so-called, have made this type of teaching and profession their watchword from the inception of that movement. They have insisted that sanctification, as they teach it, is the condition of spiritual power; but their power to influence and save the communities in which their Churches have been located has been exceedingly small. We do not call in question the sincerity of those who maintain this view, nor doubt the fact that holiness is essential to spirit-

ual power; but the statement that spiritual power pre-eminently follows in the line of this particular teaching is certainly incorrect.

5. This subject opens to ministers and all Christian workers a most solemn and difficult duty. It is as true as it is sad, that many among us, who profess to be Christians, are in a state of religious torpor. Some appear wholly unspiritual, and there is reason to fear that they have never gone beyond good desires and some resolutions to do better. Some are ready to admit that they have never realized satisfactory evidence that they were accepted of God; others had a short experience following their conversion, but have come to regard this as the end rather than the beginning of their spiritual life. Not a few, who have been in the Church for years, do not claim to be more knowing or more holy than when they first entered its communion. Some are annually warmed up in a series of meetings, but lapse into more or less indifference when special means are over. Many are under the fascinations of the world: they put the party and the lodge before the prayer-meeting; business before the Church; the world before Christ. How shall we do our whole duty to these?

Can we, in faithfulness to their souls, preach sanctification to them as the remedy for their unspiritual state? Many would undoubtedly be glad to have their religious condition passed as that of the "merely justified." They would feel relieved to have their worldliness charged up against the sin of Adam, rather than to feel the responsibility of being far from God. The teacher, too, would escape the trying work of showing them that they are still unforgiven, or that they have become backslidden.

But is this half-and-half condition a state of justification? Does sin mean only gross and outward vice? Is salvation only a purpose to be pretty good, and a desire to go to heaven when we can stay in this world no longer? Shall we patch up a superficial conversion with a superficial sanctification? It is the duty of Christian teachers to show to all men that, until they break with sin utterly, and go over to Christ, soul and body, they have not begun to experience a Scriptural salvation. A wave of pious feeling, experienced in a prayer-meeting, is no determining evidence of regeneration, much less of entire sanctification. *Consecration up to light* is a condition of justification; conse-

craton kept up to light is a condition of remaining in that state. Dr. D. D. Whedon well said: "The permanent continuity of absolute justification would be the highest sactification."

6. The magnitude of Christian privilege which this subject sets before us is beyond measure inspiring. Christ has made as ample provision for saving his people from all sin as from some sin. These provisions belong to every child of God. Jesus has made no exceptions. It would seem impossible to question this. It is not a question of human weakness or power, but of the ability and willingness of our adorable Savior. If he can keep a child of his in entire and peaceful choice of his Divine Will for an hour or a day, he can do it through all hours and all days. And why not for ever and ever? No circumstances in life can deprive any one of his children of this confidence in him. Mothers, with their broken health and burden of care; wives, with impenitent husbands in their homes; business men, loaded to the water's edge with this world's affairs; young people, in school and college; the sick, in solitude and suffering; and ministers of the holy gospel, with their complex difficulties and unequalled responsibilities; each

and all have a Savior fully able, and equally willing, to save them from all known sin. Let no Christian plead his weakness or unworthiness as a reason for doubt. "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world."² Your frail and diseased bodies will affect your mental states, and thus become sources of temptation; thoughts and impulses, unbidden and unwelcome, may leap into your intellect and feelings for the time; old habits may assail you; circumstances may try you sorely; these are your enemies, not your sin. Your sanctification does not depend upon the annihilation of your enemies. "Sanctification, whether in part or in whole, is in the measure of the incoming and power of the Spirit. It is entire when, through his presence and power, the evil tendencies are subdued, and the dominance of the spiritual life is complete."³ Only make choice always of Jesus' will. Let your consecration become an irreversible dedication of your all to him, and dare to trust him as implicitly for constant sanctification as you trusted him for pardon at the first. When Jesus said, "It is finished," he saw every child of his,

² 1 John iv, 4.

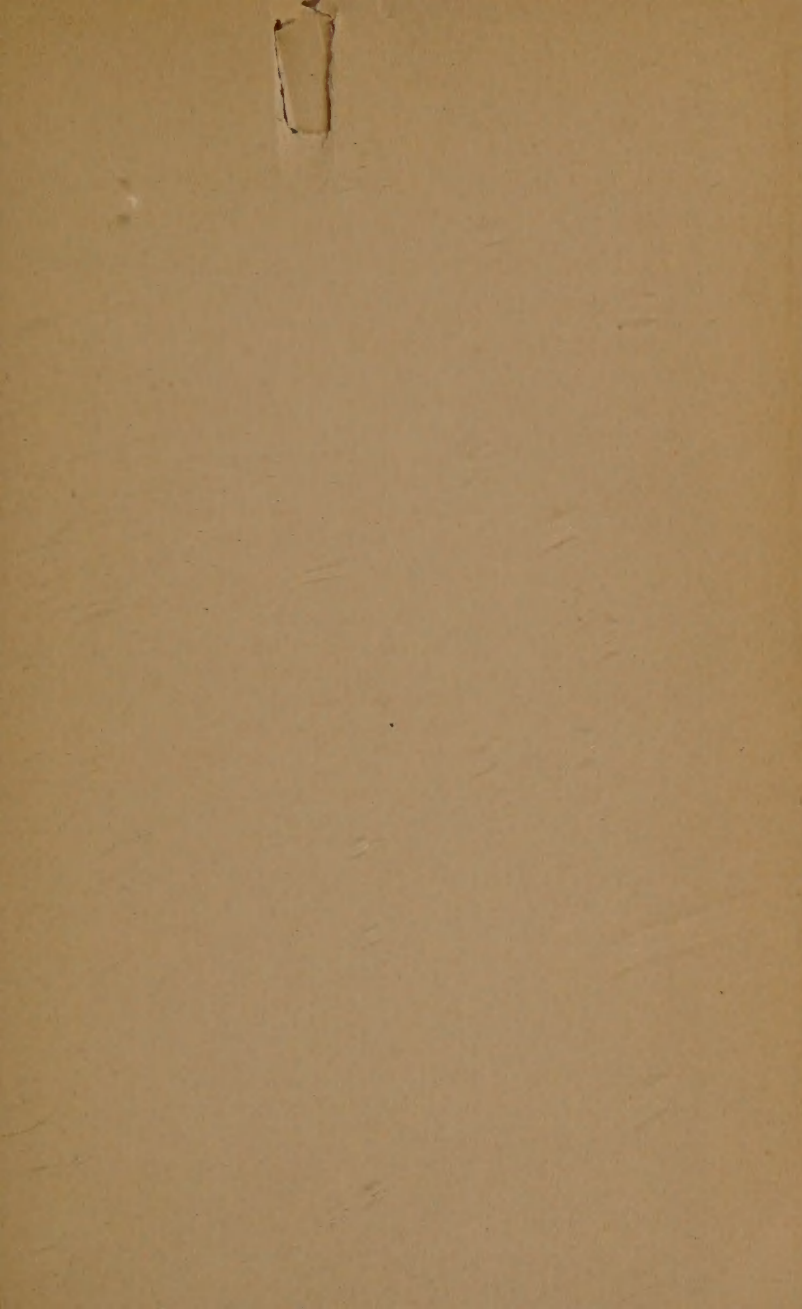
³ Miley's Systematic Theology, II, 365.

through all time, and in all their conditions of life. His words are a holy pledge that, to each and every one of his children, he will become the Divine Power and Life, all-sufficient to save and keep them from sin.

“But can it be that I should prove
Forever faithful to thy love;
From sin forever cease?
I thank Thee for the blessed hope;
It lifts my drooping spirits up;
It gives me back my peace.

In Thee, O Lord, I put my trust,
Mighty, and merciful, and just;
Thy sacred Word is passed;
And I, who dare thy Word believe,
Without committing sin shall live;
Shall live to God at last.”

—*Charles Wesley.*



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767 Sin and holiness; or, What it is to be holy, by Rev. D. W. C.
H85 Huntington. Cincinnati, Curtis & Jennings; New York,
Eaton & Mains, 1898.
288 p. 19^{cm}.

334979

1. Holiness. 2. Sin. 1. Title.

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